

STRANGE STRUGGLE

by

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. . . now Norma's nylon-clad knee joined her hand in gentle caressing Susie in her misery. Sympathy and loving kindness now would cement their love in its distorted defense against brutal male aggression . . .

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CHAPTER ONE

"Come on, my little blonde don't be shy," said the exotically clad brunette behind Susie and confidently took hold of the furry angora sweater. Her voice was seductive and sultry as she helped whisk the little blonde's head and shoulders.

"Please don't go modest with me, Norma," she said. "You should be proud of having such a good figure. And, after all, we're alone here."

The younger girl was too surprised to want to risk offending Norma, the physical education instructor at the college who was so often being helpful and friendly. And then Susie felt the hand at the back of her brassiere coming down. The petite blonde could voice a word, but she was sliding down off her shoulders.

As Susie started to cover her hands in maidenly modesty, Norma rose in a slow feline motion, and her hands began to unbutton the white wool socks from her legs. She looked in frank and ardent admiration at the female figure, now clad only in white briefs.

"You're really lovely and perfect," she said. "Don't ever try to hide your beauty from me." Norma rose in a slow feline motion, and her hands began to slide lightly up Susie's exposed body in appreciation of the firm youthful contours.

were Susie's fingers in the elastic waist-band of the remaining panties, soon eased down over the tautly rounded hips.

"Come on: Let's get rid of these. Then you can hop right into the tub and hide your modest innocence under all those suds. They'll make a blanket thick enough and soft enough for your lovely tender body."

Susie quickly kicked the filmy panties off her feet and jumped into the tub. As the layer of fragrant foam closed over her, the little blonde sighed at relief from her embarrassment and at the exquisite feel of the warm water on her sensitive and tired flesh. With only her cute face and blonde curls showing above the dense froth, Susie looked up at her hostess who was standing beside the tub. Above her long slimly curved legs Norma's trim body was proudly displayed in the tight leotard. And the brunette's gaze showed a strange mixture of admiration and affection which Susie was too relaxed and sleepy to analyse.

After a moment Norma knelt down beside the tub and in her low gentle coaxing voice said, "Roll over onto your tummy now, Susie. Then I can massage all the tiredness out of your back and legs. The heat will help and I know how to massage you till you'll feel all alive and invigorated."

The strong assured hands began to massage the whole length of Susie's back, allowing the rejuvenating heat of the bath to penetrate deep into the relaxing tissues. Now the satiny skin of lower legs received the same exhilarating attention. The petite blonde girl felt her whole body relaxing into a glorious drowsiness while the warmth of the water and the expert handling set her inner body into a radiant and exhilarating glow. Her muscles were almost flaccid but she could feel her blood coursing deep within. All thoughts of modesty disappeared and nothing could be more natural or more pleasant than

to have her flesh massaged into such exquisite languour.

When Susie was nearly asleep from the total relaxation, the calm hypnotic sensuous voice of the assured older girl bade her rise from the warm bath with its blanket of soft foam. Immediately Susie was wrapped in a huge turkish towel and led docilely into the adjoining bedroom.

"Now lie down, lovely little doll, and I'll get you all dry and comfortable. It's nice and warm in here so you won't need anything on you."

Hands wielded the big towel with expert deftness and hands dusted fragrant powder over the sleepily acquiescent body. Susie felt the swirling warmth within her increase disturbingly. Each tender gesture of Norma's seemed to reassure her partner, and at the same time bring her inner turmoil nearer and nearer to release.

Norma knew that she must work very slowly now so as not to frighten off her innocent prey. One false move or one aggressive gesture could irrevocably destroy the situation which she had so subtly built up. There must be no demands. There must be only the slow and gradual giving of love and ecstasy. Real intimacy must wait till the victim was fully prepared.

In her almost hypnotic drowsiness Susie vaguely recognized the feelings which were now taking possession of her. But now she felt safe. There was no man anywhere near her. No Brad. No violent aggressive masculine demands on her. She did not have to be on the defensive against her own feelings or against anything her partner might do. There was no Enemy. No *man*. She could accept and enjoy the relaxation which she felt building up within her body. Norma's voice was so reassuring and loving. Norma was interested only in giving, not in demanding and dominating and hurting. Her actions and her words proved that.

"You're so beautiful. So perfect, my little Susie. I want

to touch you and love you. I want to show you how much I love you, and give you pleasure. And when I will kiss you I will know that it feels as good for you as it does for me. And that's what I want. I'll never hurt you or be rough and demanding with you. Our love will always be sweet and gentle and beautiful. Let yourself go, Susie. Let me bring you the most wonderful feelings you've ever known. I want to do things for you, not to you. Things like this, - - - and this."

With no demands from Norma, the petite blonde found herself instinctively contributing to their mutual searchings for love. The hotly glowing ball of passion within her seemed to expand until there was no room for her body to contain it. At last in a burst of surging glory Susie's passion exploded into a continuous avalanche of soaring emotional sparks.

When at last they lay in each other's arms in temporary satiation, Susie let her mind wander back to the events of the last hour or so. Not that she felt any guilt over what had transpired, but just searching for what had changed her feelings for Norma and their relationship to each other.

After two fast and exhilarating sets of tennis on the college courts the two girls had walked slowly up the stairs to the second floor of a garden apartment which overlooked the campus and athletic fields of State Teachers College. The rolling green vista was just budding with the full rich foliage of Spring, and both girls were glowing and radiantly warm from their violent exertions in the bright sunlight. As Norma unlocked the door to her apartment she had spoken with seeming casualness to her little blonde friend.

"I'm glad you could come up and relax for a few minutes with me before you have to go home. Sit down and I'll make us some drinks."

"Thanks, Norma." Susie had replied. "I'm just begin-

ning to get my breath back."

"Your form has improved wonderfully, dear," said the dark-haired older girl with the exquisitely streamlined body. Then she smiled as she corrected herself. "Your tennis form, I mean. Your figure couldn't possibly be improved. It's delightful, already."

Presently Norma appeared with two long frosty glasses and Susie looked up to thank her hostess as she took one of the drinks. The neat coiffure of the older dark-haired girl had not been disturbed by their game, and her smooth warmly tan skin offered a striking contrast to the chie white tennis-dress she wore. The short pleated flaring skirt barely covered the brief white panties which encased her loins, and the snug bodice clung to the firm mounds of her trim breasts.

The two girls sipped their drinks while Norma calculatingly studied her lovely young guest. "You rest here now and finish your drink while I take a quick shower and change. I'll be right back."

As Susie lazily let her gaze wander over the neatly trimmed lawns and sedate gray buildings of the college community she was vaguely aware of the hypnotic sound of the shower in the background. Then almost as if by magic, Norma was back in the room and taking the empty glass from the tiny blonde girl. The brunette now wore a skin-tight leotard of black elasticized nylon which clasped her sleekly flowing curves from high on her thighs to the straps over her shoulders. The thin clinging fabric lovingly exhibited Norma's smoothly firm athlete's form and her sinuous flowing grace of motion. Her voice had a strange sensuous huskiness as she spoke.

"As your Phys Ed teacher, I think you ought to take a hot bath now before you start driving home, Susie. Then you won't be so stiff and sore tomorrow. You get ready and I'll start drawing the tub right now."

"I hate to impose on you like this," said the tiny

blonde rising stiffly from the couch. "But I'll have to admit that the idea of a hot bath sounds just about perfect. Between the tennis and the drink I'm as limp as a wet rag and about as forceful as a newborn kitten."

"Fine. So come on, my kitten." And Norma led the way into the bath where she started the hot water gushing onto a liberal dose of sweetly pungent bath-salts. A musky aroma arose and a thick blanket of soft foam spread over the water's surface.

Susie stood by, waiting for her hostess to leave before she started to undress, but to her alarm, Norma showed no sign of giving her guest any privacy. And it was at this point that Susie began to learn that Norma wanted to be more than just a casual friend.

In the intimately lazy period while both girls recovered from their tempests of passion, Norma was inwardly delighted that there was no trace of guilt or recrimination in the attitude or words of the little blonde. Once again Norma's predatory Lesbian instincts had enabled her to find a delightful and willing partner for her twisted emotions. The svelte brunette frowned slightly to herself as a disturbing thought flashed through her mind.

Was it true that little Susie was the ideal, the most perfect lover that she had ever seduced into the joys of sapphic dalliance? Or was it just her innocence and the novelty of conquest that made her seem so wonderful? Would this liason last? Or would it just be another fleeting and temporary attachment like all the others before? Only time would tell.

CHAPTER TWO

When the wonderful warm relaxation following their passionate intimacies had been replaced by her normal need for activity, Susie got dressed in her regular school clothes for her trip home. Norma, with no sense of shyness or modesty, had remained completely nude while helping her little blonde friend put on her underwear and skirt and sweater, and carefully packed the used sportswear in Susie's small bag.

The inexperienced little blonde was thrilled but a little confused at what had taken place between them. But when the sophisticated Norma held her hands warmly and kissed her an affectionate goodbye, Susie knew that everything was going to be all right. Then with mutual assurances that they would see each other the next day, Susie went down to her car and started the half hour drive to her home.

On the road, Susie found herself hurrying, for her mother would worry if she was late for supper. Because she had driven the twenty miles twice a day, back and forth to college, for several years now, the familiar roads could not fully hold her attention, and she could think about what had happened just a little while ago with Norma. It had been wonderful. There was no question about that. The invitation, the bath and exciting massage, and the subsequent intimacies had been completely unexpected on Susie's part. She had never realized that such activities were even possible or available for her enjoyment. She had never dreamed that her body, under proper conditions of acceptance and stimulation, could provide such sensual thrills. But had their mutual caresses been equally spontaneous on Norma's part?

It was hard to tell. After several years of very slight acquaintance with Norma, Susie had noticed that the glamorously svelte Phys Ed instructor has recently seen-

ed to show a more active interest in her. Now that Susie thought back, there had been other girl students in whom Norma had shown considerable personal interest in the past. Had these others also been partners with the attractive brunette in similar odd activities? Or was Susie the only one with whom the wonderful Norma had been able to find a rewarding love?

Susie was glad that she felt no guilt. What had happened had just been between two girls, so it was not really bad. As Mother had repeatedly and passionately explained to her, the really bad things, the frightening and disgraceful and painful things were what happened with men. The disgusting and animal things that happened when a girl let a man have his way with her. Girls were more aesthetic and moral than men in every way, with none of the violent instinctive urges and passions that drove men to such terrible extremes.

Mother had never even suggested the possibility of anything bad happening between girls, so such things must be all right. If they were not Mother would certainly have told her about it. For Mother was continually warning Susie against the sins of the body, and especially about the evils and menace of *men*.

In the sense of males and their relationships with females, Susie had learned to think of the opposite sex as large frightening symbols of aggression. And her one experience along this line had amply confirmed Mother's expressed opinions. She had thought she loved Brad. Despite everything that Mother had drilled into her, Susie had felt herself strangely attracted to Brad Morrison, the tall, good-looking young teacher at the local high school. And he had seemed to like her a lot, too.

For some time their friendship had seemed to be ripening most satisfactorily, from Susie's point of view, with no hint of any thing to be feared. In fact Susie even got to the stage of partially discounting her mothers incessant

warnings, for it was very nice to know that someone as solid and dependable as Brad Morrison liked her and thought she was important. In every way he deferred to her wishes and respected her strict limitations on their conduct together.

But just after Christmas, several months before Susie's initiation into the sensual possibilities of Lesbian love this afternoon with Norma, the whole picture had changed violently. All her sense of his protective affection and honorable trustworthiness had been destroyed in a wild eruption that horribly confirmed all of her mother's most lurid prophesies of torment and doom. And it was all caused by Brad.

He was a few years older than Susie, and during their first dates together she had enjoyed his company a lot. In fact Susie was disappointed that they were unable to go out more often. But Brad was taking graduate courses at night to get his Masters Degree, so he did not have much time for social life, even with the exquisite little blonde. And as their friendship ripened Susie had not dared to mention it to Mother. The girl felt very guilty about being so secretive, but she knew that Mother would disapprove strongly of anything more than the most superficial and casual friendship with a *man*.

Despite the continual warnings from her embittered mother, Susie had found Brad's company reassuring. He was so big and calm and so certain of his goals in Life. When most other young men were out drinking and necking and bowling and all those useless activities, Brad spent most of his spare time studying and preparing for the future. With an advanced college degree, his income and his speed of advancement would both be increased. And all his students in High School not only liked him but also respected him. He always tried to be understanding and scrupulously fair, and the kids knew and appreciated this.

This break with their previous custom did not alarm Susie. The Silver Palm was a night-club and motel about half-way between State College and Indian Falls, where both Susie and Brad lived. The prospect of going there and dancing to a real orchestra was mildly exciting to the little blonde. And whatever Brad wanted to talk about must be very unusual and important for him to go to such an expensive place.

"Ooooh. This is nice," said Susie when they were seated at their small table. "I've never been here before. Have you?"

"No. This is my first time, too," replied Brad, looking around the partially filled room. "But I went through high school with Bob Ponci who runs this place now. We happened to meet in town a while ago and he asked me to bring my date out some time. I thought we could come here to celebrate."

"What are we celebrating?" asked Susie.

Brad was about to answer her when there was a tall, lean, handsome man standing over their table. Susie looked up and saw a mass of dark waving hair sleeked back from a broad forehead over piercing black eyes. A large, thin, aquiline nose gave the young man an appearance of hawk-like vigilance and masculinity. His virile strength and intensity were modified by a broad grin of flashing white teeth as he warmly greeted Brad.

"Brad, you old son-of-a-gun. It's good to see you. I didn't think you'd ever take me up on my invitation to visit this den of iniquity."

"Hello, Bob," replied Brad as he stood up. "And this is Susie Perkins. We're doing a little celebrating."

"I'm delighted to meet you, Susie," said the tall fascinating man as he bowed with Continental courtesy to acknowledge the introduction. Then with a commanding snap of his fingers the suave manager summoned a waiter who had been hovering nearby. "Bring

a bottle of our best champagne for Mr. Morrison and his guest, with my compliments."

"Thanks, Bob. But that's not necessary," protested Brad in embarrassment as the waiter left.

"If you and Miss Perkins are celebrating, you have to let me make a small contribution," replied the magnetically handsome manager, letting his astute masculine eyes appraise Susie's petite feminine beauty.

"It's awfully nice of you, Mr. Ponci," said Susie earnestly. "I've never tasted champagne before."

"Then I sincerely hope that you and Brad enjoy it as my part in your celebration," answered Bob Ponci, again bowing. "Now if you will excuse me, I have other duties to tend to. I hope to see you later."

As the manager departed Susie felt something deep inside her begin to relax. Only then did she realize that the looks and polished manner of Bob Ponci had put her instinctively on her guard. His whole appearance and bearings gave him some sort of inescapable power over all women, including the naive Susie. And he was well aware of this power he had. The little blonde knew that she would have to steel herself against such a man and his strange hypnotic aura of masculine domination. A shudder of fear passed through Susie and she forced her attention back to her escort, the man in whom she was getting too interested.

"By the way, Brad, just what is it that we are celebrating? You're making such a mystery about it."

"I'll tell you in just a minute," replied Brad, fumbling in his coat-pocket. "Let's wait till the champagne gets here, since Bob is being so generous."

Susie looked around at the other early patrons of the night-club and then the orchestra appeared on the bandstand. Just as they started up a slow dreamy number their waiter appeared with the iced bottle of champagne. After showing the bottle to Brad for his approval, the

waiter deftly opened it. A little was poured into Brad's glass, then Susie's was filled, and then Brad's glass was filled.

"I want to propose a toast," said Brad with more earnestness in his deep calm voice than Susie had ever heard before. "Let's both of us drink to a long and happy life for us. Together ! !"

"What do you mean, Brad?"

"I mean that I want you to become my wife. And starting right now, I want you to wear this to prove we're engaged." Brad's big hand opened and he held out a tiny cubical box toward Susie.

Bewildered by the unexpected turn of their talk, Susie took the box and opened it. Her eyes widened in amazement and she gasped as a small but beautiful solitaire diamond engagement ring winked at her from the satin cushion which held it.

"Ooh, Brad. It's lovely," she whispered in awe at the unexpected solemnity of the occasion. "But I haven't been thinking of you in that way at all."

"Then now is an excellent time to start thinking about me in that way and all other ways," he replied, his face alight with pleasure and anticipation. He took the ring from its nest and gently placed it on the third finger of her left hand. "There. That will remind you to think of me."

Then a shadow of frown passed over Brad's face. He still held her fingers as he asked worriedly, "You are going to say Yes, aren't you Susie? You must know that I really love you."

His proposal had come so suddenly and so unexpectedly that Susie was completely bewildered. Just moments before she was on a date with a man whom she considered as just a friend. Even to herself she had not admitted how strong was their attraction for each other. And she had not dared even hint to Mother that she had

more than the most casual and unemotional liking for the big conservative fellow. But here she was now, sitting in a glamorous and vaguely sinister night-club, with an engagement ring on her finger and a serious proposal of marriage still ringing in her ears.

"Oh, Brad. This is so unexpected that I don't know how I feel. We've been friends, but this ring and what you said changes things so much," murmured Susie, her eyes alternating between his intense and hopeful face and the glittering ring on her finger.

"Yes. Things are changed for us now," he replied softly. "Now we can start making plans for our future. Our life together."

A cold icicle seemed to stab into Susie's heart. Being engaged naturally led to getting married. And marriage meant that she would be living with Brad, in closest intimacy. She would be his, and be forced to endure the terrible indignities which Mother was always harping on. Unmarried, Susie could keep her contacts with men on a safely superficial basis. But as his wife, she would be duty bound to submit herself to his demands. And Mother had persistently drilled into Susie the horrors to which a girl was subjected by the animal instincts of men.

Brad's big hands still tenderly held hers, and she looked up for reassurance into his gentle face. Somehow Susie knew that they were meant for each other, — that they were destined to be more than just friends. He had proved his affection and respect for her by his behaviour over the past months, and by giving her the exquisite ring which now encircled her finger. Maybe Brad was different. Maybe Mother was wrong in her continual diatribes against the vicious cruelty of all men. Susie hoped so.

CHAPTER THREE

A little later that memorable evening, Bob Ponci, the startlingly handsome and magnetically masculine manager of the Silver Palm nightclub, joined Brad and Susie at their table again for a few minutes. While they were thanking him for his gift of the bottle of champagne, Bob's quick eye spotted the new ring glittering proudly on the third finger of Susie's left hand. He congratulated the couple and wished them happiness, but privately he hungered for the delectable little blonde and envied his former friend for having captured her for his own. Then he silently shrugged his broad, fastidiously clean shoulders. Even the great Roberto Ponci couldn't hope to win every time.

As Brad and Susie prepared to leave the nightclub, Brad was extremely conscious of the fact that Susie had not given him a definite answer on the basic question of becoming his wife. She still wore the ring, but she had absolutely refused even to discuss setting a time for the wedding. Certainly she would want to graduate from college first, a matter of many months in the future and within Susie's mind and heart there still raged violent conflict between what she thought and she wanted and the dire foreboding precepts of her embittered mother.

Susie was strangely quiet as they drove toward home. There was no ardent excitement and enthusiasm which disappointed Brad. He wasn't really expecting to get thrilling intimacies from her, but at least she should not appear worried and depressed. With the idea of trying to find out what was bothering her, Brad turned off the road into the small park overlooking the lake and waterfall from which their town of Indian Falls got its name. The evening was quite mild, so both got out of the car to walk over near the lake.

"Please try to give me some kind of an answer now

Susie. You must know that I love you. And I hope you love me, too."

"I like you a lot, Brad. You know that. But I don't know if I love you. And I'm all confused about whether I should marry you. There are so many things involved in marriage, and I'm not sure that I am ready for them. Or ever will be ready."

"What do you mean, darling? There's no need for you to be afraid of me for any reason. I'd never want to hurt you in any way. You know that, dear."

Silently they sat down on a broad bench and looked out over the moon-lit, star-drenched lake. With reassuring tenderness Brad put his big strong arm around Susie's petite body. As he drew her to him they kissed gently and Susie felt strange frightening sensations begin to seethe within her. Her mother had warned her against ever getting into lustful urges of her body, but Susie wanted the protection of Brad's strength in this moment of upheaval.

She snuggled against him in the enveloping stillness of the night. The small amount of champagne she had drunk could not account for the swirling warmth which was growing so alarmingly within her. Being close in Brad's arms seemed the most natural and wonderful thing in the world. Why had Mother told her that such things were so awful and terrible?

Instinctively Brad held the tiny finger against him as his hands unconsciously began to explore the delightful feminine curves so closely available. The thought that soon all her exquisite femininity would be his to enjoy sent wild thrills coursing through him. He was relatively inexperienced in such things, but he knew that their love would be truly beautiful and mutually rewarding. Not the mere furtive release of physical passions. He felt the diminutive female body of his fiancée coming vibrantly alive under the stimuli of their love and closeness. His

own masculinity was straining hard against the barriers of convention and he felt his passions surging higher and higher with each passing second. A chill ran through him as he realized how near was ecstasy in space, but how far away in time was ultimate fulfillment.

Susie could no longer ignore the demands of her heated flesh. She must do something. Immediately, before the lurking evil of her base lusts dragged her into sin and punishment. Now she knew the dangers against which Mother was always warning her. If this was love, she must fight against it with all her remaining strength before lewd carnal desires dragged her down into humiliation and disgrace.

Susie thrust Brad's arms aside and stood up.

"I don't feel well. Something is upsetting me. I'm going for a little walk by the lake." The confusion and latent passion within her flesh made Susie's whole body tremble as she tried to walk calmly away. She'd make Brad drive her home as soon as she got herself under control. She didn't dare trust herself anywhere near him now.

Brad quietly followed her and in a moment they were standing at the edge of the lake, hand in hand. He was struggling to keep his desires under control. Any attempt at unsanctioned joys right now might lose him a life-time of married ecstasy. His voice was quavering with repressed desires as he spoke.

"Don't be afraid of love, Susie. I'd never want to do anything to hurt you in any way."

The tiny blonde looked up questioningly as she answered, "I'm terribly frightened, Brad. If this is love, I never knew how strong and overwhelming and almost terrible it could be. Just kiss me, Brad, and then we'd better go on home."

She turned toward him for the expected kiss and Brad scooped her tiny form up in his strong arms. Their lips

were welded together and he crushed her whole exquisite body possessively against his chest. Susie's arms went naturally around his neck to insure maximum closeness. His arms around her back and under her thighs seemed the ultimate in protective intimacy for her.

They could feel each other's hearts pounding as Brad slowly carried her back to the bench on which they had been sitting. Gently and lovingly he laid his burden down on the bench and sat beside her. The closeness of her beauty and the feel of her warm curving flesh in his male hands was almost more than he could stand. As he gazed in rapture down into her lovely young face, barely visible in the soft moonlight, his hands still clasped her body at hip and breast.

"We must stop, Brad," pleaded Susie, as much to command herself as to order her partner. "All this is so new and frightening. I seem to be on fire all over from being with you. I can't hold still."

Her writhings had slid her skirt well up her smooth dainty thighs, and as one of Brad's hands cupped her breast his other hand found bare flesh above the top of her nylon hose.

"Stop. I have to go," said Susie's words and mind, but her arms reached up to drag Brad down onto her quivering supine form. Her own mixed feelings of fear and passion were as confusing and frightening to the girl as the loving, threatening presence of immense Brad above her.

So far Brad had been able to resist the demands of his urges. But this evidence of loving acceptance from his betrothed fiance broke the massive dam of his restraint. With his mouth and one hand he held Susie helpless while his other hand prepared them both for the ultimate in carnal communion.

He neither knew or cared whether her struggles were caused by her passions or her attempts at defending

her virtue. Within seconds his overheated instincts took complete control. Too long abstinence made his desire rage for relief. They loved each other and this sacrament of sex must serve to seal their contract of future marriage. He knew he was going too far and too fast but he could not stop now. Nature's demands must be satisfied.

With a powerful irresistible surge he drove to completion with her. So intense and urgent was his passion that he felt his loins explode immediately. Even before he could make another movement. His release was so sudden that it provided only physical relief, with no pleasure or emotionally rewarding content at all.

For Susie these last few moments had been a time of terror and agony. As Brad's hands violated her, all of Mother's nightmarish tales of male brutality flashed through the little blonde's head. With frantic strength she tried to escape his clutching hands and overwhelming weight. From confused sensual ecstasy her feelings changed to stark horror.

When she felt him in domination again, when he thrashed her legs to be free of her, when he felt his were dead. And when his violent drive shattered her tender flesh she felt such terrible pain that she knew her whole body had been burst under his weight. Her scream of anguish was muffled by his overwhelming force. Her whole body tensed to repel this terrible man. Mother had been right. All men were not created equal. Only dirty beasts could do this thing to a woman. Love.

Instantly after his passion had subsided, when he had made a terrible mistake, when he might not erase the vicious wound he had inflicted upon the girl he had thought he loved, when he had gotten so horribly out of control, when he had clenched and he felt violent, when he felt that he could he ever hope to regain his love and respect.

How could he prove his regret and penitence?

Slowly he sat up and tried to console the wildly sobbing girl. He tried to straighten her dress to preserve the ruins of her modesty, but she fiercely struck his hands away. He tried to tell her of his sorrow and shame, but she slapped him across his face with all her strength and he did not resent the blow or try to defend himself from it. She could not speak coherently but it was obvious she wanted nothing to do with him in any way.

Minutes later they were both still sitting distraught on the bench. Susie's sobs of shame, torment, and panic had somewhat calmed, but she still could not express her anguish of body and soul. To her surprise Susie found that she was blaming herself more than she was blaming Brad for the terrible holocaust she had endured from him. Mother had warned her that all men were by nature cruel and bestial. Susie had ignored this advice and had tried to enjoy love with Brad, so it was her own fault that she had been made to suffer so horribly in body and soul. But that any girl could willingly undertake to marry and partake in such activities as part of her expected duties was more than Susie could understand. At last she broke the wall of silence that separated them so completely.

"Please take me home now, Brad."

"Of course, darling. Anything you say. But please let me tell you how terribly sorry I am about what happened just now."

Susie turned to face him accusingly. "Why be sorry? Didn't you expect to do that to me when we were married?"

"Yes. But it — — —."

"Then don't talk about it. What happened was awful enough, but you just make it worse by trying to explain. Please take me home."

In utter silence they walked to the car and drove

slowly to Indian Falls. During the drive she came
surprised to find the diamond engagement ring still on
her finger. The discovery shocked her, for in a way it
seemed to commit her to acceptance of what had taken
place. And more in the future.

She removed the ring and held it in her hand where it
seemed to burn her skin as a symbol of her acquiescence
to their tragedy. When the car stopped in front of her
house Susie opened the door.

"Don't bother to get out Brad. I can make it alone.
thanks."

Then she handed him the ring, being careful not to
touch him. "You'd better take this now. We won't be
needing it, I'm sure."

With enforced calm she walked up the path to her
front door. It had been a terrible experience, but at least
she had learned from it. Now she knew that Mother was
right. No upright or sensitive girl should ever consider
getting married, except as a last resort to avoid destruc-
tion. Even the best of men were just savage beasts with
women as their natural victims.

As she closed and locked the front door Susie saw
Brad's car drive slowly away. Only then did she realize
that one thing she had said to him would become the
formula and principle of her life from now on "I can
make it alone."

CHAPTER FOUR

Driving home from college after her sexuality inter-
lude with Norma had given Susie plenty of time to digest
her experience with the slim dark boy. His inexperience.
And to compare it with her only similar experience, —
her assault by Brad. And in Susie's mind there could be
no question as to which form of love was the more re-
warding. Exquisite pleasure as against pain and humili-
ation. Maybe she would not have to live totally alone

with her dreams and bodily yearnings. With Norma she need have neither moral regrets nor physical distress.

Susie slowed down and turned into the driveway of her home. She collected the two books and the big loose-leaf notebook off the seat beside her and skipped lightly across the front lawn to where Mother was waiting on the porch.

"You're late, Susie. Is everything all right?"

"Everything's fine, Mother. I played some tennis after my last class. By the time I'd changed afterwards I was a little late. But I didn't think you'd worry since I'd be home by dinner-time."

"All right. Supper's almost ready. But I do worry about you. Driving so far twice a day. There's no telling what might happen to you if something went wrong with the car. Men are so quick to take advantage of any girl in distress, you know."

"Oh, that reminds me. There were two phone calls for you just a little while ago. Charlie Griffiths called to confirm your date for this coming Saturday evening. He'll pick you up here around eight. And that nice Brad Morrison called. He said he'd call back later to talk to you."

"Are you sure you're perfectly safe going out with Charlie? He seems very quiet and nice, but you can never trust a man. Even the best of them are always out to use a girl if the chance comes up."

"I know, Mother. You've told me," replied Susie. "But I'm sure I won't have any trouble with Charlie. He's never tried anything. He's not the type."

"How do you know? All men are the same. And you should consider yourself very fortunate that you won't have to depend on any man. With your college education you'll be able to support yourself very nicely. You'll never have to submit to any man. You should be very thankful that I've been able to give you such a good start in life. You can be free and independent, — not any

man's slave. You can be mistress of your own soul. And body."

There was a long silence following this pronouncement. Both women ate quietly even though their minds were active. When she had removed the dishes of the main course and brought in the dessert Susie asked quietly, "If you feel so strongly against all men and their baser instincts, Mother, why did you marry Daddy?"

Mrs. Perkins flinched as if an old painful wound had been intentionally probed. She looked across at her lovely blonde daughter and then dropped her eyes as if in embarrassment when she met Susie's calm questioning gaze.

"I suppose that under the circumstances it's a natural question," admitted Mother slowly. "And now that you're all grown up I guess you deserve an answer."

"Your father and I were really only married for about one week," she began hesitantly. "And I can only thank God that it didn't last longer. I don't think I would have survived if it had."

"But why did you marry him in the first place if you knew men were so brutal?" interrupted Susie as her mother paused.

"Ignorance and family pressure," answered her mother resentfully. "I'll try to explain it to you so you'll realize how much I've saved you from. You'll never have to barter your innocence and your human dignity. You'll always be free."

Again there was silence while Mrs. Perkins assembled the pieces of her life-story to be told to her child. In a way it would be good to have an ally in her perpetual struggle against a man-dominated world. But in another way it was humiliating to have to expose the sordid details of her brief marriage.

"My parents came from poor peasant stock in Europe and never really prospered here. As a child I led a very sheltered existence, protected by my father's Old World

ideas of proper activities for girls. When he died, after a long illness when I was seventeen, my mother and I were left in desperate financial straits."

"How did you meet Daddy?" asked Susie.

"He nearly ran me down with his car. And I was foolish enough to be impressed and overwhelmed by his glamorous uniform and his family money and prestige. The Perkins were a wealthy and prominent family in town, and their only son was home for a month's leave from the Air Force before being sent back overseas to fly again."

"He was handsome, wasn't he?" said Susie. "I've seen the picture you have of him in his uniform with all the medals."

"After almost hitting me as I crossed the street, he began paying ardent court to me. Within a week after we first met, he proposed marriage. In my ignorance, or innocence, I was delighted. Not only was I getting a handsome and wealthy husband. My marriage would also solve the crushing money problems which faced my mother and me. In any event, urged on by my worried mother, we were married in the local church just a week before he had to report back to the Air Force. It turned out to be a tragic mistake."

There was a taut silence before Susie's mother could go on. Now her manner showed militant defiance, in contrast to her previous sense of shame.

"I told you I had led a sheltered existence and was cruelly uninformed on the so-called Facts of Life as they applied to newly-weds. I remember our honeymoon only as a series of horrible offenses against my defenseless body and all human dignity. From our wedding-night till the day, a week later, when he left to return to the war in Europe, he made incessant demands that were both painful and humiliating. If our marriage had lasted much longer I might have killed him as he slept in temporary satiation beside me."

"And he was killed in the war soon after that?" asked Susie gently.

"Within a month after his return to duty I got a telegram reporting him missing after an air raid mission he was flying. But by that time I knew that I was going to have a baby, — his baby."

"You were sorry about that?"

"I was them. It seemed to make my marriage irrevocable. It meant there was no escape from my husband and his terrible demands. But now I know that you were my reward for putting up with him for that awful week. And I have devoted my whole life to making sure that you will never have to suffer in body and soul to satisfy any man. You are not ignorant of what men want and the price they demand from a woman when they marry her. And as for family pressure, I will fight with my life to keep you free of any man."

The evening dusk had darkened as the two women talked over the supper table. Now it was quite dark, but neither mother nor daughter made any move to put on a light. Such words and thoughts as occupied them were best concealed under the cushioning gloom. The sympathetic communion between their frightened defiant souls was shattered by the phone.

"It's probably Brad calling you again," said Mother dully. "Why did you and he break up last winter? He seemed so quiet and steady. You seemed to like going to the movies with him occasionally."

"He's a man," said Susie abruptly. "That's why we broke up."

She groped her way into the hall and picked up the telephone. "Hello?"

"Hello, Susie. This is Brad. I tried to get you earlier."

"Mother told me."

"I'm just calling again for the hundreth time to ask if you'll see me. Anywhere and any time. I just want a

chance to apologize in person for what happened between us that time."

"I don't think there's any need to talk about it. It happened, and that's that. I shouldn't even be surprised that it happened. Talking now can't change anything, can it?"

"Maybe not, Susie. But my intentions have always been honorable. Then and now. And the ring is still waiting for you whenever you change your mind. I still love you. I just wish you'd give me a chance to get things straightened out between us."

"There's nothing between us that could possibly be straightened out to suit you. You're a man."

"You make that sound like an accusation or a dirty word, Susie."

"Well?"

"I've said I'm sorry. And all I'm asking is a chance to change my terrible mistake into something really nice for both of us. A life-time of love for us. Together."

"No, Brad. Seeing you again would just remind us of something that I've tried to forget. I can't really blame you for what happened, but nothing could be gained by rehashing it."

"All right, Susie. But I'm going to keep trying. Some day maybe you'll be able to forgive me. I still want you to be my wife. I love you."

"Good night, Brad," said Susie and hung up the phone.

CHAPTER FIVE

Bob Ponci seemed to be all smiles and charming courtesy as he admitted the obviously feminine and nicely dressed young brunette to his private office at the Silver Palm night club. But behind his broad smile and gracious manner his shrewd eyes were taking in every significant detail of his guest. Nice face and hair. Lush figure and probably all real. Probably about twenty. Looked a little scared, and he could guess why she was here to see him.

She followed him into the neat modernistic office, and gave a slight startled jump as the door clicked solidly shut behind him. Ponci indicated a chair for her, and then retired behind the large desk where he sat in polite attentiveness.

"And what may I do for you, Miss — —?" he asked with assured courtesy.

"Oh. O'm sorry. I'm Cecile Reynolds, Cissie Reynolds," she said awkwardly in answer to his question. "I was told to speak to Roberto, the manager here. Are you him? I mean 'he'?"

"Yes. I am Roberto. And who suggested that you speak to me, Miss Reynolds?"

"A - a - friend. Another student out at State College."

"Indeed?" Ponci replied, and then let the silence lengthen. Now he was even surer of the purpose of her visit. But let her make the next move. In situations like this, always keep them on the defensive. That way he was always in control.

When it became obvious that the virilely attractive and poised man was leaving the conversation up to her, Cissy was at a loss on how to go on. Finally she blurted out in embarrassment.

"I need some money. Quite a lot of money, for me. And my - my friend said that you might be able to help me solve my problem."

"Indeed?" repeated the suavely handsome dark-haired man calmly. Then he asked, "How much money do you need? And what do you need it for?"

The girl glanced at him and then lowered her eyes to study the wall-to-wall carpeting as a faint blush of shame and confusion tinged her face and neck.

"I don't really know just how much money I need. Probably around five hundred dollars."

"That is a lot of money," agreed Ponci with all the outward signs of sympathy while he continued to study the

girl with extreme care. "But through the Student Employment people at the College you should be able to get a part-time job and save up that amount during the next year."

"But I can't wait that long. I need the money soon, — now. And I don't want my family to find out about it."

"About what?"

"Please don't make it hard for me, Mr. Roberto," pleaded the girl softly. Then she plunged ahead with her story. "I'm pregnant. And I need the money very soon. For an abortion."

"That's too bad, Miss Reynolds. You have a very serious problem, I agree," said the dynamically handsome man. "But can't your — your fiance help you out, somehow?"

"No. And I wouldn't let him if he could," replied the girl with anger. "He's even more scared than I am. And after seeing him like this, I wouldn't marry him if he was the last man on Earth."

"You have my sincerest sympathies, Miss Reynolds," the assured man told her. "But how am I supposed to be able to help you?"

"My friend at College said you could give me a job where I could earn the money I need quickly."

"Perhaps my abilities have been exaggerated to you, Miss Reynolds. Who is this friend who referred you to me?"

Cissy Reynolds looked at the tall attractive man facing her for a long moment before she answered. Then she said, "June Melvin."

"Oh, yes. I remember Miss Melvin quite well. And did she explain to you the type of employment she had here to earn the money she needed last year?"

"Yes, she did," replied Cissy in a voice so low that her words could hardly be heard.

Again there was a long pause in the conversation, but

this time Ponci broke the silence.

"I don't want to embarrass you unnecessarily, Miss Reynolds, but you must realize that I have to be very careful on such matters as we seem to be discussing. Would you explain to me in your own words just what you expect to do to earn the money you need so promptly?"

A look of grim determination came over the lovely young face of the girl. The muscles at the sides of her jaws clenched and her hands were thrust out before her as she spoke.

"I expect to become a singer in your musical hall to earn the money."

"There is no need to be so nervous," said Roberto Ponci. "Come to me for help. I don't want to see you in such a state. We both feel better about it if you tell me you were willing to accept blind fate in the first place than that I would arrange for you."

"Call it anything you want," replied the girl in quiet anger and desperation. "It's the same thing, doesn't it?"

"Not at all. I would make sure that the man you had dates with were sober gentlemen, and that they were honest. I could assure you of protection against anything the authorities. And I could provide you with as much money as you want with no chance of being caught."

"But they wouldn't be the same kind of men."

"Let's not create any more trouble," said Roberto Ponci smoothly. "This is a very serious matter. It is a real asset, and it is better to have it than to let it self off by her own hands. I have seen many girls at State College who have been in such a state that you would be doing the same thing. It is better to stop as soon as you have the money you need."

course.

"How long would it take?" asked Cissy; trying to be calm and business-like in discussing a matter that made her whole soul and body writhe with fear and disgust. "How much would I make on each 'date', as you call them?"

"That's hard to tell, exactly, my dear. You are a very attractive girl, as I'm sure you know. You would receive half of what the customer pays, plus any tips or 'luck-money' he may give you. If you will really try to co-operate, and be available whenever needed, I'm sure that you can earn at least a hundred dollars a week."

"Then I should have the money I need in about a month?"

"Probably. And have you made the arrangements to spend this money?"

"No. Not yet. I've only been sure that I had the problem for the past week or so. The most important thing seemed to be getting the money. When I was sure I'd have it, I could plan spending it."

"If you're interested, I may be able to put you in touch with a very reliable man who specializes in solving problems such as yours."

"The same doctor who took care of June Melvin?"

"Yes. Did she like him?"

"I hardly think you could say she liked him," replied Cissy with a wry smile. "But he solved her problem with a minimum of trouble, she says. When the time comes, maybe I'll see him."

Having settled that part of their discussion Ponci turned the conversation to more immediate things. "Have you decided to work here at the Silver Palm, the way we've been talking about?"

"I have no choice. It's the only way out for me under the circumstances," replied Cissy with the doomed resignation of helpless defeat. "When do you want me to

start?"

"The sooner you start, the sooner you'll reach your goal," said Roberto with a friendly smile. "If you could come back after dinner this evening I could probably arrange at least one date for you tonight. Then tomorrow and over the weekend you could really get started."

"So, just like that, I'm in business in the world's oldest profession. All right, Mr. Roberto. I'll be back later for my first 'date'."

"I'd like to make a few suggestions, Miss Reynolds. You're free to take them or leave them, of course, but they may be of help to you in adjusting to your new job and in increasing your income."

"If anything can help me in any way, I'd like to hear about it," said Cissy quietly. "This job, as you call it, isn't going to be easy for me."

"Well, in the first place, don't use your own name. That will help keep you from identifying with what you are doing, and will help prevent anyone else from identifying you by chance. But pick a name you will remember easily. Have you a middle name?"

"Yes. Dorothy. But I never use it."

"All the better. Why don't you become 'Dottie' for purposes of your work here?"

"All right. What next?"

"You are obviously young and your whole manner places you as a college-type girl. Play up those qualities as much as you can. It will increase your value to most of your customers."

"How can I do that?"

"Dress the part. Right now you look like any attractive, well-dressed young lady applying for a job or out on an informal date. But with low heeled sport shoes, ankle-socks, and a skirt with a tight sweater, you would look younger, definitely upper-class, and harder to get. Wear a minimum of make-up and keep your hair-do very

casual. In talking, show off your brains just a little. Enough to impress the man, but not enough to scare him off. You might even let the fact that you are scared half to death show a little. It will make the man feel more of a man. And, after all, that's what they are paying you to prove anyway."

"I think I understand what you mean and I'll try to follow through on your ideas. I'll be back later, about nine o'clock. How shall I get in touch with you then?"

"Just come in and sit at the bar, if it isn't too crowded," replied Roberto Ponci calmly. "Order a drink, if you want to, and tell the bartender you want to speak to me. Or a waiter, if the bar is full or busy. I'll come see you as soon as I'm free. In the meanwhile, try not to be upset. It won't be as bad as you imagine now. And it will be all over in a couple of weeks, I'm sure."

The suavely vital Roberto held the door as Cissy started to leave. She tried to return his smile but her tears were too near the surface to make the effort successful. She turned to walk away, but stopped in her tracks as he said, "Good bye, Dottie. Good luck."

CHAPTER SIX

With his brief-case under his arm Brad walked slowly toward the exit. He'd stop and get a hamburger somewhere while driving back to Indian Falls. Then an hour of studying before he went to bed. He could feel his shoulders sagging with weariness and discouragement as he slouched toward where his car was parked. Was the perpetual struggle really worth it?

"Brad. Brad Morrison. You're just the man to rescue a maiden in distress," called a feminine voice at the building entrance.

"Oh. Hello, Carol," said Brad as he swung around and saw an attractive brown-haired girl hurrying toward him. Her smooth full face was flushed and her prominent

breasts jiggle tautly within her snug sweater as she ran the last few steps. When she stopped right before him and looked up into his face Brad had to keep pulling his eyes up from where her bulging sweater heaved in proud display from her panting.

"Am I glad to find someone I know from Indian Falls?" gasped the girl as she caught her breath. "I had visions of having to phone Daddy to come all the way over here to pick me up. And you can imagine how much that would please him."

"I'm going there right now," offered Brad. "I'll take you home. What happened?"

"I stayed over for supper and a meeting. And then just as I started to drive home to Indian Falls my car got temperamental and stopped. I left it about a block from here and ran over when I saw the evening courses were just letting out."

"What's the matter with your car?"

"Who knows? All I know is that it won't get me back home. I'll let the garage worry about it in the morning if you'll give me a lift."

As Brad helped her into his car and then eased his big frame in behind the wheel, he recalled Carol Brandon as he had known her at Indian Falls High School a couple of years ago. Even then she had a reputation for being pretty wild, but her family's wealth and influence effectively kept her out of any serious trouble. She was always very popular and sure to be actively involved in any parties or proms. Always completely sure of herself in any situation and aggressively determined to have fun.

"It was swell of you to give me a lift, Brad," she murmured, sliding over to sit close to him. "Let's stop at the Silver Palm on the way home. I can buy you a drink or so to repay your generosity."

"That's not necessary, Carol. After all, I live in Indian Falls, too, so you're not taking me out of my way."

"Oh, come on. Don't be stuffy. We'll just have a couple of drinks and dance. We'll have fun and I can sign my Dad's name for anything we want."

Despite his tiredness, Carol's eager enthusiasm and vivacity made the idea appeal to Brad. He had been working hard, and hadn't had a real date since that terrible evening with Susie months before. The prospect of relaxing and enjoying himself for an hour or so with this assured and attractive girl seemed like a real inspiration.

"All right, Carol. You've convinced me," Brad told her heartily. "But don't be silly about paying for our drinks. I'll take care of it."

As they drove along the dark highway, Brad was fascinated by her gay chatter and was increasingly conscious of her feminine presence as her firm thigh pressed against his and her full proud breast was thrust against his elbow. His acute masculine need for sensual relief was further emphasized as Carol's hand dropped as if by accident onto his thigh and stayed there. And to punctuate her cheerful banter, her fingers kept gripping into his flesh till he could feel himself responding.

With all the light excited gaiety of her manner Brad could feel an icy hand clamp around his heart. By staying away from girls and their temptations, he could usually keep his primitive instincts well under control. But he remembered with horror what had happened that night with little Susie when his passions had swept everything before them. He would take no chances on any possible repetition of anything like that. Carol's casual intimacy was probably only her way of being friendly in return for his driving her home. Brad would not let her teasing lead him beyond the point of no return.

"Here we are. Come on, Brad. Relax and let's have fun while we're here," said Carol eagerly. Her hand was gripping harder and higher on his leg and Brad feared she might become conscious of his reaction to her closeness.

He parked in the dim lot behind the Silver Palm while his body thrilled to Carol's gesture and his heart pounded in fear for his own response. He switched off the headlights and was about to jump out when Carol reached up and dragged his face down toward hers.

Their lips met in a fleeting kiss and Brad fought unsuccessfully for control of himself. As they drew apart Carol murmured clearly, "You're a dear, Brad, to do this for me. I really appreciate it, and I'm glad you like me, too."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't try to kid me. You're a big boy now," giggled Carol, letting her hand again drop significantly onto his upper thigh. "But let's not waste time out here. We'll have a couple of drinks to get us really in orbit and then we can blast off."

Brad was bewildered by her words and what they could mean, but he followed her into the bar. They perched on stools and had just ordered their first drinks when Bob Ponci appeared.

"Good evening, Miss Brandon. Hello, Brad," Bob said.

"Hello, Roberto," replied Carol. "You can thank me for dragging Brad here tonight. My car bogged down at college this evening and he's taking me home. But I insisted we stop here for refueling and fun."

"I'm glad. It's good to see both of you," answered Roberto courteously. Then he studied Brad with increased interest. Did the seemingly stolid and conservative fellow know what he was playing with? This girl was dynamite, anyway you looked at it. Was Brad man enough to be able to handle her and all the potential problems she could represent? Roberto sincerely hoped so, for he did not want to get involved in any unnecessary trouble.

By the time that their second drink had been served, Brad could feel himself relaxing. The memory of his last time here, with Susie, had faded into a hazy unreality. And his former fatigue had given way to a pleasant and

uplifting sense of enjoyment. He danced with Carol and there could be no question but what her body was pressed closer against him than was absolutely necessary. But he knew enough not to take her exciting intimacy seriously. He'd enjoy what she offered but would be very careful not to let himself get out of control. As they returned to the bar from the dance floor, Brad glanced at his watch.

"It's after midnight, Carol. We both have a big day tomorrow so maybe we'd better move along."

"OK. I'll be with you in a minute. Let me powder my nose and I'll be right back."

Brad paid for their drinks at the bar and then glanced casually around in the intimate dimness of the lounge. He was feeling much better than he had an hour or so before. The drinks and Carol's obvious friendliness and lush femininity somehow made him relax and feel completely at peace with the world. The rhythmic throbbing of the orchestra in the background added hypnotically to his euphoria. Then his attention focused on a strange scene being enacted at the other end of the room.

Carol and Bob Ponci were engaged in what seemed to be a vigorous argument. Carol was insisting on something, while the tall handsome manager was trying to refuse her demands. Brad stood up and started toward them across the room. Ponci glanced over and saw him approaching, and seemed to admit defeat in his verbal battle with Carol. Reluctantly the suave manager handed Carol something, and by the time that Brad got to them, they were both smiling in evidence of complete agreement.

"Everything all right?" Brad asked.

"Just fine, darling. Couldn't be better, laughed Carol, and Brad saw a glint of excitement in her eyes. "Come on. We'll get out of here. Good night, Roberto."

She seemed to be almost dragging Brad by the hand as they left the nightclub. Then, instead of turning toward

the parking lot, she led him in the other direction, over to the long line of dimly lit motel cabins.

"Hey, Carol. The car's over that way."

"I know. But there's something over here I want you to see. Come with me."

Surprised and vaguely protesting Brad followed the cheerful and excited girl. She unlocked the door to one of the cabins and pulled him inside.

"Just wait here a second, Brad. I have something to show you that I think you'll like to see," and Carol stepped into the adjoining bath, closing the door behind her.

Brad was completely bewildered by the quick sequence of unexpected events. He noted that the Venetian blinds were all closed and a soft light coming from a table lamp. Being alone in this motel room with the excitingly vital and delightfully formed girl gave him wild ideas, but he kept himself strictly under control. He had gotten himself into terrible trouble once by letting his passions get the best of him, and he was not going to let it happen again. Especially not with Carol Brandon. He hardly knew her, really, and he father was a very important person in Indian Falls, so Brad was going to watch his step very carefully. In fact, even being here, alone in this motel with her at night would look very bad, so he'd get her out of here and take her home as soon as possible. Just as Brad reached this conclusion the door to the bath clicked and he heard Carol's strangely tense and eager voice.

"Here's what I want you to see, Brad. I hope you like it and know what to do." Then the door swung open, and with the light from the bath behind her, and the soft sensuous glow from the table lamp illuminating her, Brad saw that she was completely naked and walking slowly toward him.

He stood in shocked amazement, his eyes instinctively taking in every detail of her long curving legs, her firmly

rounded hips, her slim waist, and her boldly out-thrust breasts with their pink tips firmed into proud erection. Her excited eyes and full-lipped moist mouth showed no trace of shame or modesty—only pleasure at her success in startling him, an invitation for him to continue to the obvious and inevitable finale of the stark drama which she was initiating.

Only when he felt her high taut breasts actually touch his chest, and her arms go up around his neck did Brad accept the reality of what was happening. He clasped her smooth warm body against him with a force that drove the breath from her lungs. And as his hands gloried in the exquisite sensualness of her ardent nudity, his lips sought hers and fused in a kiss of superb rapture.

The instant that Brad's embrace relaxed, Carol's hands were busy loosening his clothing. In their mutual eagerness they fumbled and wasted time but each movement and caress was so thrilling and sensitizing that neither one of the couple resented the lost time. Carol squealed and giggled in excited anticipation as she found him ready for their coming intimacies. Within seconds they were sprawled side by side on the bed, ecstatically employed in fevered exploration of each other's most intimate secrets, in frantic preparation for what must inevitably follow.

With one hand and his hotly gasping mouth Brad stimulated and worshipped Carol's full high breasts, teasing the dainty pink nipples into erotic firmness. His other hand traced excited and exciting patterns over and around the steep tapered columns of her firm thighs. Her hips, buttocks, and flatly curved belly did not lack for his fervent caresses while her hands aroused him nearly to the point of frenzy. They were working on each other with hectic speed and intensity, and then suddenly their super-heated flesh was conjoined in the ultimate closeness.

Carol's acceleration to moaning, heaving passion was

so swift, and Brad's need for release after long continence was so acute, that they never really got a chance to establish a metered rhythm to the final act of their love making. Each sensed the other mounting rapidly toward ecstasy, and this spurred them both on toward rocketing climax. It seemed that only for moments were their bodies locked together in total possession and engulfment. Then Brad felt his male passions erupting with staggering violence, and he knew that his release was sending Carol soaring into wildest ecstasy along with him.

Then later they were lying on the bed in temporary satiation, and Brad was trying to sort out the confusion that swirled within him. How had he ever come to be in a situation like this — so different from his usual plodding and conservative way of life? And how had he ever come to enjoy such exquisite sensual pleasure with the rich and glamorous young Carol Brandon?

CHAPTER SEVEN

The sign on the office door said only, "William R. Brandon, Attorney" in the most discreet and conservative lettering, but that didn't tell the whole story by any means. In reality, the whole town of Indian Falls was run by decisions and orders emanating from the sound-proofed private rooms within.

It was nearly noon of a bright Spring day which was fairly typical of most days in the life of the political boss of the whole Indian Falls area. Big Bill was sitting calmly behind his big desk talking to a heavy-set man who stood with his hat in his hand as though about to be dismissed at the end of an uncomfortable interview.

"Now get this into your thick head, and don't forget it, Spencer," said Big Bill Brandon with deceptive calm. "Just because you're Chief of Police in this town, don't go barging off on your own without orders. You do what you're told, and only what you're told."

club manager entered a few seconds later, he was cordially greeted by Big Bill. "Hello, Bob. What's the good news to report this week?"

"Pretty good, Bill. Our gross is nearly a thousand bucks better than last week. And the profit margin is up, too."

"How does it break down?"

"Just about the way you said it would, now that we've really got it rolling. The main room and the food are gradually picking up, but nothing really big. But the bar business is way up. And we're really going to town with the motel and the girls."

"That's right. Just like I expected. Men who come in for a girl will spend a wad of dough. Only the best for themselves and for the girl. They want to make like big shots to impress the broad before they take her out to the motel for a quickie. It all ties together. But there's one thing we can't forget."

"What's that, Bill?"

"If the client is willing and able to shoot a big roll of cash, we've got to be sure to give him his money's worth. We want him to be anxious to come back for more. Soon and often."

"I'll go along with that, Bill. And with that in mind, I've been trying to upgrade our talent for the motel. Pretty soon we'll have a really terrific collection of girls to choose from. All young and built and willing to co-operate all the way."

"How do you get them?"

"Several different ways, Bill. Sometimes a guy will bring his own dame, and if she looks good, I'll try to get her on our string of available girls a couple of nights a week. Or some hooker will come in looking for a job as a waitress. If she has what it takes, I hire her and then show her how she can make out better by hustling her fanny than by dealing dishes off her arm. But the really best ones I've been getting from State College."

"What? You dling it for dough instead of giving it away for free to their boy friends?"

"That's right. And they've got looks, they're all young, they've got class, and most of them really need the money it brings them."

"I thought all those college kids had plenty of dough. Like my Carol."

"Most of them do. But when some co-ed finds she's in a jam from giving it away to some guy, she doesn't dare go to her family for the money to get rid of her problem. Her young stud hasn't that kind of dough to give her, and she needs it quick."

"I get it. You let her work it out on her back. The same way she got in trouble. That's a good system you've got running, Bob. And you're such a lucky bastard, I suppose you demand a sample, a trial ride, from every damned one of them, too."

"No, Bill, I don't," replied Bob ruefully to his smiling boss. "I keep my nose clean. That way the word gets around among the fast crowd at college that I can be trusted and will work with them to help solve their problems without giving them a rough time. If I asked for free samples I wouldn't get all the girls to work the motel, the way I do now."

"You're being smart, Bob. I like to see a young fellow who can keep his eye on the main chance. Business before pleasure, is always best. You'll go a long way if you keep on like that." Then Big Bill Brandon's manner changed as he asked seriously, "There hasn't been any trouble with the setup there, has there?"

"No, Bill, not a thing. And I keep my eyes open pretty well to prevent it. Have you heard of anything?"

"Only that Spencer, the Police Chief, knows about being able to get hot-and-cold-running-maid-service in the motel," replied Brandon slowly. "Mayor Hargraves made

a political speech to the Women Voters League, and promised to clean up all the funspots around here. Spencer took him seriously and was all set to raid the Silver Palm till I told him to mind his own business. It's all fixed now, but I don't want anything to spoil the nice arrangement we've got working. It's easier to prevent trouble than to have to cure it after it happens."

"You're so right, Bill," replied Bob Ponci. Then he drew a deep breath as he prepared to plunge into possibly dangerous waters. "And that gives me a chance to bring up something that's been bothering me."

"You want more money? A bigger cut of the take?"

"No, Bill. I'm satisfied with what I'm making for now. When things pick up, I expect more, but I'm sure I won't have to ask for it. Not from you." Again Bob paused before he continued, "It's about your daughter, Carol."

"Carol's quite a girl, isn't she?" beamed Big Bill Brandon, swelling with parental pride. Then his brow wrinkled as he said, "But I didn't know you were interested in her."

"It's not that, Bill," said Bob hastily. "It's just that I want to keep us all out of trouble of any sort. If I knew how much Carol knows about our setup, I could handle the situation better without sticking anybody's neck out."

"What in hell are you talking about?" demanded Big Bill Brandon, rising up in rage from his chair and leaning forward threateningly over his desk. "Carol doesn't know a damned thing about my connection with the Silver Palm. Or with any of the other special arrangements around Indian Falls. What in hell has she been doing that could make trouble?"

"Give it to me straight, Ponci. Tell me everything you know, and everything you've heard, and all the rumors going around about Carol. You know you can trust me if you level with me. But God help you if you're not anything funny. Like trying to pressure me."

"How does she cause trouble there?"

"She orders rounds of drinks and then signs for them with your name. She sometimes makes cracks at the girls who are working the motel deal for me, so that anybody at the bar can know that we have girls available and she knows about it. That connects you with it, too. She got mad at some couple at the bar, regular customers there, and threw a drink all over the woman. When she resented what she did, Carol told them she was your daughter, and dared them to do anything about it. They haven't been back since."

"How much does she know about the girl deal?"

"I can't tell really. But some of the fellows who come there with her, come back a day or so later and try to get bargain rates from me for some dame. It looks like Carol knows plenty and talks too much. If that's the way you want it, that's OK with me. But it looks like trouble, and I don't want to get caught in the squeeze."

"How much does Carol drink there?"

"Enough. But she doesn't get drunk, or pass out, or anything messy like that."

"Anything else? Don't be afraid to level with me, Bob. You've gone this far, so give me the rest, if there is any more."

"Well, I don't know how to put this, Boss. I know how college kids behave and all that, but I feel funny talking to the girl's father like this, especially since I work for him."

"Go on. Let's have the worst."

"Is it all right with you if Carol borrows one of the motel units for a while, and signs for it?"

There was a strained silence between the two men who sat staring at each other across the desk. Big Bill Brandon was shocked at what he had heard, and hoped that there could be a mistake or trick in it somewhere. His Carol acting like a cheap floozy. And so many people knowing about it. Aside from the obvious threat to his franchise.

and political security, there was the very personal shame which she was bringing down upon them all. Could Bob Ponci really be telling the truth, or was it all a bad dream? Or some terrible trick to destroy his power by hitting in his only sensitive spot?

"Was she with some young college fellow?" asked the older man, secretly praying that his child had found a real love and was just proving it before getting married.

"Sometimes. But not always."

"Oh, Christ!" The hardened politician's hands clenched so hard that his knuckles showed white. His little Carol, no better than a tart. Acting like a bitch in heat. No wonder she hadn't been so close and confiding with him lately. And knowing that some of his wealth came from peddling girls' favors in what was little better than a common whore-house. And using the same beds, herself.

"Do you know any of the men? The ones she's gone to the motel with?" demanded Big Bill, torn between bitter anguish and raging anger.

"Not really. I'd recognize them if I saw them, probably. But I couldn't be sure."

"Don't give me that, damn you. Tell me the name of one man who's had her. You're not that stupid, Ponci. I want to kill the sonofabitch with my bare hands. Tell me one man, if you want to be alive this time tomorrow."

Big Bill Brandon was standing up, nearly crazy with shame and rage. His threat was no empty one, as Bob knew all too well. Bob realized where his loyalty lay, even if it mean sacrificing a former friend. He had to give the information.

"The only one I can be sure of is Brad Morrison." He said calmly, and saw the insane light of hatred fade from Big Bill's eyes as he found a target for his rage.

"Who's he? Some pimply kid? Or a junior grade hoodlum?"

"Neither one. Brad is a teacher at the high school here

in Indian Falls. He taught Carol there, and now he's taking graduate courses at State College for an advanced degree, so he knows her there, too."

"That's a hell of a way for a teacher to be behaving with a student," said Big Bill.

"Don't get me wrong, Bill. I'm all on your side," Bob said quiteily. "But I've known Brad Morrison all my life. He's a hell of a fine guy. One of the few I grew up with who turned out right. And I'll give it to you straight that I'm sure he wasn't the one to suggest going to the motel. You may not like it, but it's God's truth that Carol was the one who asked me for the pass-key."

Again there was a long silence as Big Bill stared at his companion, trying to accept the bitter truth of what he had heard. And he also had to accept the fact that Bob Ponci had not told him to cause trouble, but to avoid it. The worldly and handsome manager could not be deceived as easily as a doting father could.

Finally Big Bill pulled himself together and took a deep breath. Facts were facts, and it was time to face them. Worrying wouldn't do any good. This was a time for action.

"I can't say I'm glad to hear all this, Bob. But it's better that I know since it's happened. I want you to keep on just as before. Forget you've told me anything about Carol. Don't let on to Carol or to anybody else about what you know or what I know. I appreciate your leveling with me, even though what you've had to say has been hard for me to take. I'll see you next week, as usual. And till then, keep your mouth shut."

When Bob Ponci had gone out, Big Bill sat with his head in his hands for several minutes. He was overwhelmed with shame and anger, but he had long ago learned that such feelings were useless unless accompanied by appropriate actions to recover from a temporary

setback. Through the intercom he spoke to his secretary.

"Get me the Superintendant of Schools on the phone."

A few moments later Big Bill had his usual quiet confidence-inspiring manner as he said, "Hello, Harold. This is Bill Brandon. I'd like to get some information from you. What can you tell me about Brad Morrison? I'll tell you frankly that he and my daughter, Carol, seem pretty interested in each other. I just want to find out what she's caught. To see if she can keep it, or should throw it back. And I'll appreciate it if you keep my inquiry very much to yourself for the present."

CHAPTER EIGHT

Promptly at six-thirty that Saturday evening Charlie Griffiths' gray sedan pulled up in front of the Perkins residence. The slender driver passed a comb through his wavy hair and surveyed the result in the rear-view mirror before he got out of the car. As he walked up to the front door he carefully adjusted the handkerchief which showed its edge in his breast pocket, and with fretful motions of his limp wrists made certain that his shirt cuffs were properly visible in his jacket sleeves.

"Good evening, Charlie." Mother Perkins greeted him at the door. "Come in for a minute and sit down. Susie ought to be ready soon. I'll tell her you're here."

"Thank you, Mrs. Perkins," said the young man, sinking angularly into the proffered chair. "We don't want to be late for the first show, you know. I understand it's quite an inspiring picture."

"Hello, Charlie. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting," announced Susie as she bounced gaily into the room a moment later. "Let's get going so we'll see the newsreel of the first show. And, Mother, we'll be sure not to be late."

As Charlie's conservative gray sedan pulled away from the curb on their way to the movies, neither occupant

noticed a black convertible which began following them from where it had been parked a few houses up the block. The occupant of the second car was Norma Allen, the physical education instructor from State College, who just a few days previously had discovered the wildest ecstasy in introducing the naive Susie into the joys of exclusively female passions. Norma had tried to entice Susie back for another rewarding bout of Lesbian dalliance over the week-end, but Susie had insisted that she had to be home in Indian Falls.

With the instant suspicion and unthinking jealousy of the Sapphie sisterhood, Norma immediately jumped to the conclusion that already her little blonde doll was being unfaithful to their secret and exotic love. The experienced and cynical brunette had driven all the way over from State College to spy on her beloved partner. Norma's feelings were strangely mixed. She didn't know whether she wanted the satisfaction of proving that Susie was cheating on their private and personal relationship, or whether she wanted to be assured of Susie's constancy and fidelity to her girlish lover.

But now she had definite proof, for she had seen Charlie arrive at Susie's home, and a few minutes later leave, with Susie as his willing companion. Now Norma's twisted passions insisted that she follow the unsuspecting couple and eek on all their activities for the evening. The she could have firm evidence with which to accuse Susie next week. And after being convicted of unfaithfulness, the little blonde would be even more subject to Norma's demands for sensual attentions.

When Charlie parked near the movie theater, Norma was surprised, but still unseen, she managed to park her own car and follow them into the theater where she got a seat with a good view of them from the rear. In the next two hours the suspicious brunette paid only scant attention to the drama being unfolded on the screen be-

fore her. All her efforts were involved in carefully watching every slightest movement and gesture of Susie and her male escort for signs of what they meant to each other and its possible results for Norma's plans. She was both surprised and confused when she could find no slightest hint of any feeling or affection between the couple even when a movingly romantic scene was portrayed in the picture.

When the performance was almost finished, Norma left the theater and waited in the lobby for her unsuspecting prey to emerge. With the volatile and quickly shifting emotions of all confirmed Lesbians, the brunette, having seemingly proven that Susie was not unfaithful to her new-found love, could not wait to see her and bask in her company. Susie's escort must not suspect that there was anything more than casual friendship between the two girls, but at least Norma could enjoy the little blonde's companionship and gloat over their shared secret. As she saw Susie and her date approaching in the lobby, the worldly brunette feigned amazement at the encounter.

"Well, what a nice surprise! Fancy meeting you here like this when I was just going in for the second show."

"Hello, Norma. Did you come all the way over here from college just to see this movie alone?" Susie greeted her strange friend. She was glad to see Norma but hoped that the brunette would not let on by even the slightest hint that they were more than acquaintances. "Oh, and this is Charlie Griffiths. Norma Allen."

Norma was startled at the clammy hand and weak grip which Susie's companion acknowledged the introduction. And when she looked searchingly into his face, Norma found that he could not, or would not, meet her direct glance. Her fertile imagination immediately jumped to conclusions, and these thoughts were confirmed as she studied Charlie more thoroughly.

He was dressed with exaggerated attention to fussy

details, she found. His hair was self-consciously wavy and a little too long. And as he stood diffidently in the lobby with the two girls, one of his legs was delicately bent at the knees while one of his hands rested petulantly on his hip with a gracefully bent wrist. Norma was willing to bet that if he became angry, Charlie would stamp his foot and shriek in exasperation.

Having identified Charlie as a male counterpart to her own distorted emotions, Norma could immediately relax. Susie must be smarter than she had thought. By going out on occasional harmless dates such as this, with a boy like Charlie, Susie could avoid any rumors about anti-social tendencies without having to contend with normal male desires and aggressiveness. Norma did such things herself from time to time to prevent the curious busybodies at State College from wondering about her emotional life. It was a smart cover-up for all concerned. Norma had suspected that there was a man somewhere in little Susie's background. Such a perfect little doll could not hope to escape masculine attention of the cruder sort forever. But if Charlie was Susie's 'man,' Norma knew she had nothing to fear from the competition.

"I'm not too keen on seeing the show," said Norma, determined to turn the situation to her own advantage now that she understood it. "It's much more fun to be with friends, anyway. Let's all three do something together. How about a drink somewhere?"

"Well, I don't know . . ." said Susie doubtfully, glancing up at Charlie for his opinion.

"It isn't very late, but . . ." said Charlie glancing hurriedly around for help. He forced himself to go out on dates with girls every now and then in order to give at least an appearance of normality to his social life, but he didn't want to spend a lot of money unnecessarily. And this Norma person was quite alarming to him, the way she kept staring at him with her knowing smile. Charlie was

trying hard to be like the other fellows, but anything novel or even slightly irregular during the course of his therapeutic dates immediately frightened him. Why couldn't he have just been permitted to take Susie home now, without getting mixed up with this other strange and aggressive girl?

"Good. It's all settled, then," announced Norma, taking command of the situation. "Come on, you two. We'll just hop into my car and go out to the Silver Palm for a drink. I'm parked just up the block a little way. We'll be back in an hour or so."

Almost unwillingly Susie and Charlie allowed themselves to be herded along by the dominating Norma. Charlie did not dare object to the suggestions for fear of encountering a situation which would make public his more or less successfully hidden deviation from the usual male pattern of emotional orientation. And Susie was delighted at Norma's enthusiasm and attentiveness, and sure of the older girl's discretion. Even the thought of going to the Silver Palm did not distress her, although it had been the starting place for her terrible session of brutal assault at the hands of Brad. With Norma to handle things, Susie felt completely safe.

As they passed the corner drugstore on their way to the car, the door opened and Brad Morrison strode out, bumping into Norma as he opened a pack of cigarettes he had just purchased.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to . . ." he apologized to his unknown victim. Then he recognized Susie in the group and stopped in open-mouth surprise. "Oh, hello, Susie. I'm sorry I barged into your friends."

"Hello, Brad," murmured the petite blonde in a frightened, barely audible voice. This was the first time she had seen or been close to Brad since the horror and tragedy of her rape months before. Even though she knew she was safe here in the middle of town, accompanied by

her friends, she felt a knot of fear form within her in his overwhelming masculine presence. Then with an effort to comply with the social amenities, in spite of her panic, Susie continued, "This is Brad Morrison, an old—I mean, we used to be—well, I used to go out with him. And this is Charlie Griffiths, and Norma Allen. Norma teaches Phys Ed out at College."

"Hello, Norma. Hello, Charlie," said Brad, shaking hands firmly with the two strangers. Then, without being impolite to them, Brad's attention was devoted solely to Susie as he said, "It's wonderful to see you again, Susie. I've missed you a lot."

"I can imagine," replied Susie, torn between anger and fear at this chance encounter. "And I can also imagine why."

"Please don't be like that, Susie," Brad begged with deep sincerity. "You know how I feel."

"Indeed I do," said Susie as her anger and resentment won out over her first feelings of wildest fright.

"Would you all come back in here and have a Coke or a soda for a few minutes with me?" suggested Brad, determined not to lose Susie again so soon, now that he was in her company again after all this time. With her friends present, he knew that she could not give vent to her anger at him, but neither could she justifiably fear him. And maybe if he could stay with her, he could somehow prove that his intentions were honorable and that he was not the cruel monster she imagined him to be.

Norma quickly sensed the tension that existed between her delightful little Susie and the big solid young man. So this was the virile male who was responsible for Susie's fear of men? Even though she did not go for his type, or for any man, Norma sensed his appeal for most girls. And she felt supremely confident of her ability to handle the present situation to her own benefit. Charlie certainly represented no threat to her plans for Susie,

and if she could rub Susie's nose in the mess which Brad had evidently made of their original mutual attraction, it would strengthen the bond which now bound the two girls together. There was nothing like the unwanted presence of an old love to cement even tighter the new love.

"That sounds like a swell idea," announced Norma definitely. "But let's go out to the Silver Palm instead. We can get real drinks there."

Her proposal was greeted with silence, but she would accept no opposition. She insisted that they all go in her car, and the four of them were on their way out of town before they could protest. Brad and Charlie were sitting in the back seat of her open convertible, so that Susie and she would not have their hair so mussed by the wind, she said. There was no further conversation during the ride, but strangely different thoughts buffeted the minds of the four riders in the following minutes of silence.

Norma was gloating over her success in collecting this group. By exposing Susie to Brad, the little blonde would be further frightened and alienated from him. Norma would contrive to put him in the worst possible light, and would try to find out exactly what was the evidently serious trouble between them. Charlie was an emotional non-entity in the picture, but would seem wonderfully safe and harmless by comparison. By the end of this evening, Susie would be a willing slave to Norma's deviate desires, a condition which Norma found exciting.

Brad devoted his time to seeking a way to reinstate himself in Susie's good graces, now that fate had given him the unexpected opportunity to see her and be with her. Norma and Charlie were merely unimportant accessories, as he saw the picture. The only important thing was to convince Susie that he really loved her, and that their first attempt at physical intimacy had been a horrible mistake on his part, one for which he would

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tified Brad as one of the occupants.

"Hello, Brad. It's good to see you here. And Miss Perkin's, too." Then Bob's sharp eyes saw that Susie was no longer wearing the solitaire engagement ring that she had received there on the memorable evening months before. Was Brad's engagement to the lovely little blonde all off? And who were the odd characters with them?

"Hello, Bob. I don't go in much for night-life, I'm afraid," said Brad, feeling certain that after this hint, the manager would not mention that he had been here with Carol Brandon only a few days previously. His sudden and unexpected intimacies with Carol had provided a much-needed relief for the demands of his body, but it had been an episode that certainly would not be repeated. And he didn't want the incident to interfere with the possibility of his getting back together with Susie. She was much more important to him in every way, even though his only time of physical closeness with her had been so violent and terrible that it was still a horror to him when he could bear to think about it.

"I'm glad to see you whenever you can get here," said Bob, non-committally, taking Brad's lead. "I hope you and your friends enjoy yourselves."

"Thanks. Oh, by the way, this is Norma Allen, from State College. And Charlie Griffiths, from Indian Falls. We can't stay for long tonight."

Bob bowed graciously to acknowledge the introductions, and he quickly jumped to surprisingly accurate conclusions about both the new people. What was conservative and solid old Brad doing with a pair of jokers like these? First he comes in with a four-star, diamond-studded hellion like Carol Brandon, and ends up in a motel room with her. And now with that cute blonde and two clowns from Way Out. The brunette was a dyke, for sure, even if she was really stacked, and dressed to show it. And this Charlie character looked awful close

to being 'gay.' Bob wouldn't let himself get caught alone in the Men's Room with him, that was for sure. Who was covering up what for who? And why?

Then a terrible thought flashed through Bob Ponci's mind for the first time. Big Bill Brandon had threatened to kill Brad Morrison. And Big Bill was a man to be respected if not feared in running things locally. If Brad was still alive, maybe Big Bill had changed his mind. But Brad should be warned of his danger. Still smiling his best professional manner, Bob said, "By the way, Brad. When you have a moment free, I have something in the office I'd like you to see."

"Sure thing, Bob. How about now?" replied Brad. He then excused himself to the others at the table and walked off with the manager.

As soon as they were in the smartly furnished office of the night-club, Bob spoke with surprising seriousness. "Have you had any trouble, or heard from Big Bill Brandon?"

"The big political boss? No. I don't even know him. Why should I hear from him?" Then Brad's mind flashed back to his wild moments with Carol. He started to blush as he asked, "You mean about Carol?"

Bob nodded soberly and then went on. "I sure was surprised to see you with her last week. I know the crowd she goes with, and they're not quite your style."

"So I found out that night," said Brad. "But what's this about her father?"

"He seems to have found out about her, too, finally. And anyone she's been playing around with could be in serious trouble, from what I hear."

"But, honestly, Bob, I wasn't chasing her. Her car broke down over at State College and I just was driving her home after evening class. Stopping here, and what happened after that was all her idea. That doesn't sound very chivalrous, but it's true."

"I know. And Big Bill Brandon probably knows it, too. But he's still mad, so be careful."

"I will, Bob. And thanks for the warning," said Brad as he thoughtfully left the office and went back to the table he had left.

During his absence, Norma had started her campaign of further alienating Brad from any emotional ties with her exquisite Susie.

"Since we're such good friends now, why didn't you tell me about you and Brad?" asked the svelte brunette, ignoring Charlie's presence between them.

"That's all past and gone, long ago," answered Susie quietly. "I never expected to even see him again."

"Why? What happened?" asked Norma confidentially. "I already know so much about you, and how wonderful you are, that I feel I can ask you personal questions like this. You can trust me, Susie, dear."

"Well, Brad and I were engaged once. At least he gave me a ring and asked me to marry him." Then Susie found that she could not go on. Her mind was still too shocked, and her body still wanted to writhe and scream in protest at her disgusting and terrifying experience with male lust.

"And then he assumed he had the right to use you to satisfy his masculine desires, I'll bet," said Norma sympathetically.

Susie nodded, and then murmured, "It was awful."

"That's too bad, darling," said Norma, holding Susie's hand to show her compassion. Then the slimly dark girl turned abruptly to Charlie who was trying to make some sense out of what he was hearing, and said harshly, "Why don't you go to the Men's Room and sharpen your roller-skates, or something. We want to make woman-talk and don't need an audience."

Poor confused Charlie jumped at being so rudely addressed, and rose without a word. There was too much

happening tonight that he didn't understand. It was bad enough that he was beginning to understand himself.

Now Norma's nylon-clad knee joined her hand in gently caressing Susie in her misery. Sympathy and loving kindness now would cement their love in its distorted defense against brutal male aggression.

"I can imagine how horrible it must be to have to submit to a man. They're just beasts, thinking only of their own pleasure. I love you much more than any man could, Susie. And I want to show it by giving you every possible pleasure. I want to give, dearest. I don't demand, like some awful man. Who needs them, anyway? I can do more for you and mean more to you than any man. We don't need Brad, or Charlie, or that devilish manager of this place, do we? We will always have each other to love, won't we?"

Norma glanced up and saw Brad approaching. "Here he comes now, but you don't have to be afraid of him any more. I'll protect you, Susie. I'll keep you safe and happy with my love. Our wonderful love, that is best when we can be alone together."

"Back again. Are we ready for another drink?" said Brad pleasantly as he sat down. There was no need to show the alarm that he felt at learning of Big Bill Brandon's anger at him. "What happened to Charlie?"

"He went to the Men's Room, I think," answered Norma coolly. "You have another drink if you want. But I won't. I have to drive and take care of things."

In the Men's Room, Charlie was still trying to get his world a little bit stabilized. He had gone into a cabinet and locked the door behind him so he'd have a little privacy with his whirling thoughts. Things seemed to be crowding in on him from all sides. What did Susie mean to him? Who was this Norma to come in and start giving orders to everybody? What did he, Charlie, really feel toward the big solid masculinity of Brad?

Then Charlie became aware of other male voices talking excitedly just outside his tiny private cell.

"Man, Oh, Man!! What a ride that big blonde broad gives you. She sure has everything it takes, and knows just what to do with all of it," said one unseen voice with eager enthusiasm.

"I still like my little red-head best," answered a second man's voice. "She's young. And she does what she's told. And she's smart, too. You ought to hear that girl talk. I'll bet she's going to college. Working her way through by doing this week-ends."

"Who gives a damn what she's got between her ears?" asked the first voice querulously. "And if all you want is to hear some dame talk, you should be married to my wife. She sure can talk plenty. But this blonde sure is stacked. And with her technique, she's worth every bit of the fifty bucks for an hour. I proved that to her twice."

"Want me to pin a medal on your chest, saying you're a real he-man?" asked the second voice sarcastically. "What'll we do now?"

"Let's go have a couple more drinks at the bar. We can look over the other talent, and maybe pick out the dame we want for next week. If you'll be able to, by then."

"I can now, Jackson. But the bar sounds good. And I'll go along with you about the high-class girls that are peddling it here at the motel. The price is high, but they're really worth every buck of it."

"You can talk plainer than that," laughed the other man, and then the outer door closed behind them, leaving Charlie alone in his cabinet with his thoughts.

"Girls. He-man. Peddling it." The raucous words and ideas bounced back and forth in his mind. "Young. Really stacked. Does what she's told."

That was the answer to the chaos which was boiling within him! If he had a woman, he could prove himself a man, once and for all. That was his only possible escape

from the fate which seemed destined to engulf him in its shameful meshes. He would buy the services of one of the girls that evidently were available here at the Silver Palm. That way he would be able to prove that he could think and feel and act like a man.

The turmoil within him began to quiet down, and presently Charlie let himself out of his strange confession-booth. He carefully combed his hair in the big mirror over the row of basins, and then made his way back to the table where the others were waiting. A few minutes later when they were preparing to leave, Norma made an issue of paying the check. She insisted that it was her idea and her party, so she thrust money at the waiter, indicating even further to Susie that she had everything under control and could protect her from even a feeling of dependence on any man. Norma was both willing and able to provide everything that Susie could want, but especially in the matter of physical and emotional fulfillment in the most intimate ways possible.

As the two couples passed the bar on their way out, a shrill feminine voice called, "Hello, Brad."

His whole group turned around in answer as Brad recognized Carol Brandon coming toward him, a drink in one hand. Hastily Brad tried to present a harmless picture for Susie's benefit. "Hello, Carol. How are things going for you at college?"

"Just fine. At college, and here, too. I'm really doing fine. And the same to you," she giggled gaily.

Brad turned to introduce his companions to the strangely uninhibited girl, but found that they were walking off toward the door. He was suddenly very glad the others had left, for Carol's next words were, "How soon will I be seeing you again, Big Boy Brad? I'll bet I have some more surprising things to show you."

In terrified embarrassment Brad sought to escape. He started for the door, and half-whispered, "Let's get to-

gether again soon. Sorry, but I have to go now. Good night, Carol."

When he caught up with the others at the car, Brad tried to explain about the interruption. "That was Carol Brandon. She went to Indian Falls High a few years ago, and she's now at State College. Susie, you and Norma ought to know her."

"I know who she is," said Susie coldly. "And I know enough about her not to want to know her any better. That also applies to some of my other acquaintances."

The ride back to Indian Falls was accomplished in total silence. Each of the four was fully occupied with his or her own thoughts, and Susie was snuggled up against Norma in the front seat for comfort and protection against the symbolic threat of Brad's presence in the car with her. Norma stopped her car near the movie theater and waited while the two men got out.

"I'll take Susie home, so you two won't have to bother," said Norma bluntly, and then drove off leaving Brad and Charlie standing in the street. The two men looked after the departing car in amazement, and then turned to look confusedly at each other. Without a word they then drifted off to their own cars to drive home.

Even though it was not late, Norma insisted upon walking Susie up to her front door when they got to the Perkins home. Mother opened the door as they mounted the steps and looked with alarm at the unexpected guest.

"What happened, Susie? Why are you so late? Where is Charlie?" demanded the worried woman.

"Everything's all right, Mother. Right outside the theater after the show, we met Norma, and we've been with her ever since. This is Norma Allen, a friend of mine from college. She's the one who has helped me so much with my tennis recently," explained Susie as they entered the house.

"I'm delighted to meet you, Norma. And I'm so re-

lieved that there was another girl with Susie when she's out so late at night. You never can tell what might happen, and I worry so about Susie's safety when she's with a man." Mother was going on at a great rate, now that she was sure of her daughter's welfare. "I know that Charlie seems harmless enough, but you can never trust any man. Not with an attractive girl. And especially at night."

"Please, Mother. Try to calm down. You don't want Norma to think you're an old worry-wart, do you?" protested Susie.

"I'm sure Norma appreciates my feelings," said Mother Perkins, smiling at the newcomer. Then her expression instantly turned to one of outrage and alarm. "But how is Norma going to get home tonight. I won't permit her to drive all the way to State College alone when it must be nearly midnight. I just wouldn't feel right permitting it. She will have to stay here for the night."

Norma started to protest that she wouldn't think of inconveniencing them, but was careful to let her objections be over-ruled by the militant older woman.

"I'm sorry that we haven't a guest-room for you," apologized Mrs. Perkins. "But I'm sure you two girls can be very comfortable in the twin beds in Susie's room."

Norma pretended to accept the invitation reluctantly but deep inside her heart and body thrilled at the prospect of spending the whole night in the same room as the beautiful little blonde doll. After the emotional strains of the evening, Susie was certain to be very receptive to any and all of Norma's planned intimate attentions. The trip to Indian Falls was turning out to be even better than Norma could have wished if she had been able to plan it in advance.

"Well, it's getting later all the time," announced Mother Perkins imaginatively. "We'd all best be getting to bed." And she led the way upstairs.

Once the two girls were closed in Susie's dainty feminine bedroom, Norma took the little blonde's hands and looked deeply into her eyes. When she saw the seeds of acceptance and ecstasy, waiting to be aroused into sensual fruition and climax, Norma smiled in joyous anticipation. With ardent intensity, she spoke to her tiny lover who was still a novice at Lesbian techniques.

"Fate must have meant us for each other, dearest Susie. Look how it has thrown us together and offered us this unexpected opportunity to show what we mean to each other. We won't give you a perfumed bath tonight. It might disturb your mother. Just let me make love to you in my own way, and show you how really beautiful you are and what wonderful pleasure your lovely body can give you."

Susie nodded her agreement, for her heart was too full of excitement and unspoken questions to allow her to speak. Without further delay Susie quickly stripped off the skirt and sweater which covered her trimly curving body. Norma's voice had continued to express her love for Susie and extoll the consummate beauty of her form. And then, clad only in a tight white leotard, Norma stood before her eagerly waiting partner in Sapphic joys.

The slimness of Norma's supple athletic waist was emphasized by the firmly rounded curves of her hips and buttocks. And the almost animal fervor of her moistly pouting lips and feverishly sparkling eyes gave final proof of her eagerness to bestow carnal worship upon the trembling body of her nearly innocent convert.

Norma's words were as effective as her acts in arousing Susie's slumbering passions. Norma watched as, with grace and gestures, Susie removed the dress and slip from her frail and lushly curved body. Then, after Norma's reassuring words and firm orders against any feelings of modesty, Susie unsnapped the bursting full

brassiere which cupped her creamy, pink-tipped bosoms. When Susie's hands started up to cover those glorious hemispheres, Norma's protests were effective.

Then Norma lightly kissed Susie on the lips, in promise of further delights to come from the dainty perfection of her love. With Norma watching adoringly, Susie released the tiny garter-belt that encircled her waist, and then delicately drew off the gossamer nylons that sheathed the exquisitely formed limbs. Now with Norma's words of love preventing any possible protest, Susie slowly and deliciously slid the tiny panties down over her hips, down the curving length of her legs, and off over the diminutive feet. From her pose of worship Norma could now survey and adore with her eyes every superb detail of the little blonde's naked body, and she had Susie turn slowly before her so she could savor the dainty perfection revealed in all its passionate sensual beauty.

Slowly the exotic ritual of physical excitement continued as Norma led Susie, half hypnotized by anticipation and desire, over and had her lie down on one of the beds. Norma, still wearing her leotard leaned down so that their trembling lips met in a long and slowly more impassioned kiss.

Norma could no longer waste time with talking, but the incoherent moans and sighs of sensual pleasure were ample proof of joys being received by the little blonde. Such passion could not be long endured and it was not, but Norma had one more Sapphis rite to perform, with the hope of getting Susie to follow through with similar reciprocal stimulations.

Trembling from the reactions within her own heated tissues, Norma changed her position beside Susie. Susie was nearly insane with the new and sensitive sensations being imparted to her seething flesh. Then both souls soared together again into moaning sobbing climaxes of sensual release.

It must have been nearly dawn before Norma finally crawled across to the other twin bed to get a few hours sleep before Mrs. Perkins came to awaken them.

CHAPTER TEN

Usually Big Bill Brandon was a man of instant decisions and vigorous actions. But for the first time in many years he found himself afraid to attack a problem. For many reasons he would have to do something about the behaviour and attitude of his daughter, Carol, but he kept finding excuses for putting off the day of reckoning with her. She was his only child and his most prized possession, and he could not bring himself to bluntly accuse her of the foolish, dangerous, and immoral acts which he was convinced she was guilty of. Much as he hated to admit it even to himself, Big Bill knew that Bob Ponci had not been lying about the things Carol was doing.

Carol's actions were potentially very dangerous to her father. Such loose talking and indiscreet behaviour could easily bring financial ruin down upon the small feudal empire he had built up. And Big Bill might end up in jail, disgracing his daughter and ruining her whole life. And how could she be expected to love and respect her father if she knew he was associated with the call-girl business and with gangsters?

But the worst part was the terrible disgrace and reputation that Carol was bringing on herself. If she had the morals of an alley-cat, how could she expect to finish college, get a good husband, and become a respected member of the community? If she kept up her present way of life everyone would soon know about it and her whole future would be ruined. Even if he was able to buy her anything she wanted with his ill-gotten gains, and leave her plenty of money when he died, she would never be able to live down the reputation she had gain-

ed by her foolishness in being so wild now.

After worrying about this family problem during most of one sleepless night, Big Bill knew that he had to do something about it right now. Before it got any worse in any of the many possible ways. He rose and dressed early, and knocked on Carol's door before he heard her stirring. There was a vague grumbling murmur from within so he pushed open the door and entered her bedroom.

In her restless sleep Carol had kicked off all the covers, and lay on her stomach with her head and arms snuggling her pillow. Her gauzy exotic night-gown had slid up nearly to her hips so that her long and delightfully curved legs were exposed as they sprawled in abandoned relaxation before her father's eyes. Big Bill's gaze could not leave her superb body, but finally he shook himself and spoke abruptly to her.

"Wake up, Carol. I've got to talk to you about a couple of things."

"Mmmmmff," responded Carol, nuzzling deeper into the pillow which she was hugging.

"Come on, Carol. Pull yourself together, girl," snapped her father. "I haven't all day and this is very important. And you're due at college for classes pretty soon, aren't you?"

Carol opened one eye to stare at her father, and then closed it again as she snuggled the pillow and stretched languorously. Big Bill realized that he was looking much too long and too hard at his daughter, but he could not help himself. What a body she had! Long powerfully slim legs, tapering thighs, firm rounded hips barely covered by her diaphonous nighty, slim waist, and the hint of a bursting full breast showing beneath one outstretched arm. The kind of voluptuously young form that would drive any man crazy with desire. And from what he'd heard, she must know what to do with it. Big

Bill boiled inside to think that she had been giving it away indiscriminately to those callow college kids, and to those arrogant young hoodlums, and to a high-school teacher.

He reached out and slapped her hard across the buttocks with his hand. "Come to, Carol. Snap out of it. I want to talk to you."

Carol jumped up to a sitting position, and Big Bill knew that he had struck her too hard, harder than he should, but not as hard as he wanted to. The blow had been part parental punishment for her misbehaviour, part a means to awaken her, and part an expression of masculine power over an exciting woman.

"Cut it out, Dad. That was too hard, dammit. It stings," protested the girl, pulling the sheet up across her body as she realized how exposed she was. "Now what's all the uproar about? Why couldn't it wait till tonight?"

"Because you'd probably be out helling around again tonight, like you usually are," replied her father. Big Bill felt more at ease now. With Carol's superb femininity concealed beneath the sheet, he didn't have to keep his mind on where he was staring.

"Since when did it become a crime to have some fun?" demanded Carol irritably as she tried to rub the sleepiness out of her eyes and yawn away the cobwebs.

"When your ideas of fun get out of control," replied her father seriously. "When you're heading for trouble."

"What's that meant to mean? It's too early in the morning for me to like riddles."

"Chief Spencer of the Indian Falls Police was in to see me," said Big Bill. He wasn't going to reveal the true source of his information. That was always foolish in any situation. But Carol would want to know how he had heard about her carryings-on. Let Chief Spencer take the blame for squealing on her.

"So what?" mumbled Carol rudely. "I hope you told

about these personal things with his daughter whom he idolized. At least he now had something definite to go on.

"When I went to college, Carol, I had to work hard. But I've heard a lot about how you college kids nowadays are expected to do a lot of helling around and wild parties and stuff like that," began Big Bill, awkwardly. "I feel funny talking to you about such things. But I want to make sure you're a good girl. That's so important for your future. And you know I want all of the best for you."

Carol nearly choked, and had a hard time keeping back her smile at hearing these trite moralizing things from her father. If he only knew! But thank God he didn't! He'd really raise hell if he even suspected. She'd better soft-soap him a little more and give him a little more eye-wash to keep him satisfied.

"But what if a girl really knows she's in love?" she asked with pretended modest shyness. "Brad Morrison is so big and masculine. And works so hard preparing for his future. His wife would have a wonderful position here in Indian Falls, and every chance for security."

What Carol was telling him about this Morrison fellow agreed completely with what Big Bill had learned from the Superintendent of Schools and his other sources. Maybe Bob Ponci's story of Carol's activities was exaggerated. If the girl was really in love and wanted to marry the guy, he didn't have to be too hard on her, even if she had jumped the gun a little in the matter of permitting him intimate pleasures before marriage. Any man would want her, and if she wanted it too, it was probably all right, Big Bill decided. And he'd better get this interview over with for now. They could continue it later, — sometime when Carol was fully dressed and not in bed.

"Are you sure you really love him, Carol?" he asked, eager to be convinced. "I wouldn't want you to marry the wrong fellow, you know."

"Yes, Daddy. I think he's wonderful. And I'm sure the

feeling is mutual," replied Carol, trying to conceal her true feelings. Brad was all right, and might even make a good husband, she decided to herself. He'd be fun sometimes, and easy to fool when she felt like straying further afield to greener pastures in her incessant search for new thrills. No one man could satisfy her insatiable appetites for constant and ever wilder sexual activities, she knew from experience. But to keep out of trouble, it might be nice to have him to come home to sometimes. And an anchor to windward in case she ever happened to get pregnant by mistake.

But basically Carol knew that she didn't want to marry anybody now. She'd pretend to talk about it with her father, to calm him down for now, but that was all.

"I'd like you to introduce me to young Morrison, dear, since you are so interested in him," concluded Big Bill, easing toward the bedroom door. "And please don't do anything that could endanger your future. Even if you're in love with him. I want everything to be right for you, Carol. You're all I have, you know."

As soon as the door closed behind her father, Carol jumped out of bed and pulled her nightgown off over her head. She stood naked in front of the full length mirror on her closet-door and excitedly watched as she ran her hands sensuously over her body. Her thighs, her hips, her flatly curved belly, her taut waist, all quivered under the stimulating caresses she gave them. Then she stood boldly erect, her hands cupping beneath her lush breasts, her feet slightly spread, and stared at her image as she remembered her plans for the coming evening. Who could ever be satisfied with one husband, even a big specimen of maleness like Brad Morrison, when there were so many other thrills to discover and enjoy?

As Big Bill Brandon went downstairs where his breakfast was waiting him, he felt a little relieved. The session had certainly not gone as he had expected. He had

that Ponci was probably a lot nearer the truth about Carol than he, her father, dared get. But he'd be able to stop worrying about her soon. Once she was safely married off to this Morrison, then she'd become her husband's problem, not her father's. And meanwhile he'd follow through on his original plan and have a talk with Brad Morrison. But now it would be a friendly chat, with his future son-in-law. Not a wild, raging, threatening inquisition with the only man he was certain had seduced his beloved daughter. Big Bill sincerely hoped that Brad would turn out to be man enough to keep Carol under control once they were married. She was really something to try to handle. Not only in the matter of her superbly exciting body. But also her quick mind which enabled her to wiggle out of any adverse situation.

It was the middle of the morning when Brad was summoned from his classroom to the office of the Superintendent of Schools. This official was as confused as Brad as to Big Bill Brandon's interest in the young teacher. The superintendent liked and admired Brad, both personally and for his effective hard work and dedication to his profession of teaching. And similarly the superintendent had no illusions about Big Bill Brandon's position in the community. Brandon had power locally, every conceivable kind of power. When Big Bill wanted something, it was one. And anybody who tried to oppose him was sure to get hurt in the scuffle. The fact that Big Bill's opponents might be both legally and morally in the right did not prevent them from losing to the political boss. So how was the idealistic and dedicated Brad Morrison mixed up with the cynical and powerful Big Bill Brandon?

"Hello, Brad. Sorry to haul you out of class like this, but I just got an important message for you," said the Superintendent. "Mr. Brandon just called me, and he wants to see you in his office as soon as you can get there."

Brad felt a shiver of anxiety and fear shoot through him. "Big Bill Brandon?" he asked. "D — d — did he say what it was about?" Bob Ponci had warned him that the politician might be almost literally gunning for him, on account of Carol. But to do it openly, through the officials of the school system, didn't seem right.

"Well, he sort of hinted at it when he called the other day," replied the superintendent. "But he asked me not to talk about it. You'll find out soon enough right from him, I think. All I can say is that you're an awful lucky young fellow. Now get going. Big Bill doesn't like to be kept waiting."

As Brad drove to the Brandon offices, he was more confused than ever. How was he lucky, as the Superintendent had hinted? Just because Big Bill wasn't going to have him killed for being intimate with his daughter? But the politician certainly wouldn't have revealed that to the Superintendent. And there had been two separate phone calls about him.

Brad was immediately admitted to the inner sanctum of the political boss, and Big Bill rose genially to greet him. "Hello, Morrison. I'm glad you could come over so soon. I've been wanting to meet you."

"Hello, Mr. Brandon," said Brad carefully, shaking the proffered hand firmly. "I was surprised to get your message."

"I've been hearing some things about you from several friends of mine, so I thought it was time we had a little talk."

"What sort of things?" asked Brad guardedly. "And from whom?"

This was hardly the way an outraged father would greet the man who was meant to have seduced his daughter. Could Bob Ponci have been wrong? Or was Big Bill so smooth an operator that he was just subtly warning Brad off, if he wanted to stay healthy. He'd play it very

cagey and see what came up.

"Let's not go into that quite yet. Let's get to know each other a little, first. I'd like to call you 'Brad', and most of my friends call me 'Big Bill'. Now tell me a little about what you do and what your plans are for the future in general. Maybe I could help you jump over a few hurdles along the way."

"That's very generous of you, Mr. Brandon. I mean 'Big Bill,'" said Brad with quiet appreciation. If the politician wanted to be friendly, that was fine, Brad figured. And any boost from this influential man would certainly be very helpful in advancing his career.

Briefly but honestly Brad sketched out his past in terms of his educational and teaching experience. He explained how he was now working for his Master's degree by taking evening courses at State College, and that eventually he hoped to get his Ph. D. degree, which was almost essential if he was going on into administrative work in the teaching profession.

Big Bill Brandon listened attentively all the while that Brad was speaking. The outlined schedule was so different from his own approach to successful living that the politician was fascinated by the novelty of it, even though he could not imagine himself in the same position. The younger man was a real square, right in the same class as most of the menial men whose livelihood depended on Big Bill's decisions. He was even worse than the Mayor of Indian Falls, and the Police Chief, for this Brad Morrison didn't even realize that there were angles to be played and deals to be made and underhanded ways to get things done. But the teacher was a big, nice looking young fellow, and his naive honesty would make him an ideal husband to insure Carol's future happiness.

"What you've been telling me sounds as if you were coming along nicely on your long-range plans, Brad," said Big Bill smoothly. "But tell me about what you do

for fun. And what about your ideas on marriage and things like that?"

Brad glanced up quickly at his questioner and then answered with guarded honesty. "With my full schedule of teaching and studying, and my very limited financial resources at the moment, I haven't dared do much thinking about my personal life. Eventually I expect to get married, of course. I even have the girl picked out. But I'm afraid that will have to wait."

Brad paused for a moment, thinking how hopeless was his chance of ever getting wonderful little Susie to consent to be his wife. His one moment of wild, unthinking violence with her had probably ruined all that. But he could still dream and hope for the miracle which would bring them back together again, the way they really ought to be, as loving man and wife.

"And as for having fun and an active social life now, I can't afford either the time or the money," Brad continued realistically. "The time I brought your daughter, Carol, home from State College and we stopped at the Silver Palm, was about the only time I've had a real date for months. Being both a student and a teacher keeps me pretty busy, but I hope it will pay off eventually."

"I'm glad that you mentioned Carol," said Big Bill with obvious interest. "She's quite a girl, isn't she?"

"Yes, sir. I guess you could say that," replied Brad in confusion at this new twist in the conversation. Had all this talk been leading up to the expected threats against him because of that one night?

"Carol's my only child, and like any father, I'm concerned with getting the best for her," said Big Bill with unaccustomed feeling and sincerity. "And that means that when she wants something, I go all out to see to it that she gets it, and that it's the best."

Big Bill leaned back in his chair and looked dreamily at the ceiling as he continued. It was wonderful not

to be fighting someone to get what he wanted. Carol had said that she was in love with this fellow. He was no shrewd and aggressive, but he would make a perfect husband for Carol and insure her future security and happiness. And the young fellow had even said that he had his future wife all picked out, but would have to wait till he could afford to support her properly. Well, Carol and this Brad Morrison really wanted each other. Big Bill Brandon would make their dreams come true. And make sure that young Morrison got to where he was aiming for much quicker than he expected.

Because Big Bill was gazing at the ceiling, he did not notice the amazement and horrified alarm that passed across Brad's face as the politician outlined the change he intended to make in Brad's schedule.

"Well, young fellow, I'm never one to put obstacles in the path of young love. Especially when my daughter is involved. Carol has told me about being in love with you, and now I can see how she is so impressed with your solidness and hard work. And you've hinted that you already have her picked out, too. You can expect me to approve when you and Carol disappear into one of the motel cabins at the Silver Palm to prove how much you love each other. But I was a young fellow once too, and I know how the boys and girls like to get together in privacy sometimes. As the father of the girl I should be wanting to shoot you, but since you two are all set to get married, I can't get too upset. In fact, I can arrange to speed up the date of the wedding. Now what do you think of that?"

Big Bill now beamed magnanimously at Brad, and mistook Brad's expression of surprise and horror for one of pleased amazement.

"W - w - what do you mean?" blurted Brad.

"Don't panic, young fellow," admonished Big Bill benevolently. "I'm not getting myself all in an uproar

just because I know you and Carol have been doing a little cheating. You two kids love each other, and that's the important thing with me. Any father should think of his daughter's happiness first, and that's what I'm doing."

"B - b - but, Mr. Brandon. You don't understand. We've only - - -," Brad sputtered.

"Stop trying to kid me, Brad. And now that I'm practically your new father-in-law, don't forget to call me 'Big Bill'. We're going to be good friends. Just wait till you hear how I can help you. And so be helping Carol at the same time."

Suddenly Brad realized that now was not the time to try to disillusion the influential politician about the relationship between himself and Carol Brandon. Something would have to be done, but now was not the time. It could only result in an even worse misunderstanding all around.

"The way I see it is this," said Big Bill, again studying the ceiling as he voiced his plans. "You and Carol announce your engagement immediately. That would stop any nasty rumors or stories from being circulated. Then in a couple of months, sometime this coming summer, you could get married in a big ceremony, with all the trimmings. I can afford the best for Carol, so we'll really do it up brown, with bridesmaids and champagne and a reception and all that stuff."

"B - b - but I don't want - - -" began Brad hopelessly.

"The best is none too good for my daughter, so all you have to do is relax and enjoy it. That's all I want. Be magnanimously. Any rich man in town could do all that for his daughter, but listen to the son of our plan. The new Junior High School will be opening next September, and I can fix it so that you will be made interested there. That will give you ~~some~~ a lot of time, and I'll give you out money-wise, too. In the meantime I can give you

you put on the town payroll, as some kind of a consultant on student curriculum. You won't have to do anything but collect the pay every month. Then next year I can pull some strings and get you an honorary Ph. D. degree from State College. That will boost your salary some more. Then we can get you into local politics. And within five years we can have you in Washington or some other big job. With your background and reputation I can really put you and Carol way up there. And fast."

Brad was completely stunned by what he was hearing. Whatever he had been expecting at the start of this interview, it certainly was not this. He had no doubts but what Big Bill Brandon could accomplish all that he had been talking about. But Brad didn't want it at that price. Brad still loved Susie, and had no intention of marrying Carol Brandon. Even without her reputation for wildness, he didn't love her. And she certainly didn't really love him, no matter what she had told her father.

"Well, I'm sure glad to have had this chat with you, Brad," Big Bill was going on. "I think Carol's a lucky girl to have gotten you. And I know damned well that you're a lucky guy to have got her and all the things that I can do for the pair of you. Now, run along, Brad. I'm a busy man, and I'm going to be even busier now working out the details of your future. Come out to the house for dinner with Carol and me soon, and we can talk some more and get all your plans squared away."

Big Bill Brandon stood up, indicating that the session was over. He shook hands heartily with the still bewildered Brad, and then let him out by the back door. As Brad slowly left the building, he could only be sure that no amount of influence and money backing him would make it worthwhile to give up Susie and marry Carol.

Or would it?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

When Cissie Reynolds reported back to the Silver Palm nightclub later that first evening, there were so many things for her to worry about that she hardly knew where to begin. She had taken Bob Ponci's suggestions about her appearance, and was trying to remember all the things she was meant to do to soften the blow of the terrible project on which she was embarking.

She entered the bar and was heading for an empty seat when she heard a familiar voice behind her say: "Hello, Dottie. I'm glad you decided to come back."

At first she paid no attention, but suddenly she realized that the man was addressing her by the name she had assumed for her new job. She spun around and found Bob Ponci smiling encouragingly at her. Cissie tried to make herself smile back, but she knew it was not completely successful. The strikingly handsome man held out his hand, and without being intentionally rude, Cissie could not ignore the gesture of friendliness.

"You don't have to be afraid of me, Dottie," he assured her kindly. "If you step over here for a minute, I'd like to talk to you."

Cissie obediently followed him to a corner near the hatcheck booth, where they could have complete privacy from being overheard, but not appear to be engaged in anything secret.

"Smile, Dottie, as if we were friends and I had just offered to buy you a drink. As a matter of fact, I am your friend while you're here. I want to avoid trouble as much as you do. And as for drinking, you may have one or two if you want to, but don't take any chances on having too many, even this first time. That's the surest way to get yourself in even deeper trouble than you are now." He paused and looked her over with casual appraisal. Then he went on, "You're done a good job of following

up on my suggestions. Now I'd like to make one more. Okay?"

Cissie nodded dully, hardly able to realize that she was being so calm and listening so casually under the circumstances. Here she was on the verge of selling herself like a cheap prostitute, and yet she was behaving as if it was just another date. No, not a cheap prostitute, she corrected herself. A very expensive one, she hoped, for it was only for the money that she so desperately needed that she was doing it.

"My suggestion is one that will help you get the most out of this deal with the least wear and tear on you, I think. When you are with the men who are paying for your services, try to do exactly what they want. Do no more and no less. Forget what you may like, and even forget what you may think of the man personally. Just do what he wants and you'll be all right. And try to relax a little, both now and later. And remember, no matter what happens, I'm on your side, and you can't get any more pregnant."

Cissie glanced up at him and almost smiled at this strange source of consolation. In a way it was very assuring to know that this bizarrely handsome and dominating man was her ally. "What do I do if I see someone I know here?" she asked.

"Pretend you don't see or recognize them if possible," Ponci advised her. "If they recognize you, pretend you are in a hurry to get back to your date, or to the ladies-room, or somewhere. If there is ever any question about your date, just explain that he's an old friend, or a friend of your family's, from back home."

Cissie digested this for a moment, nodding that she understood. Then Bob said gently, "There's a man in the bar who has asked for a young, classy girl. He wants her as soon as possible. I've been stalling him, hoping you'd come back. Shall I introduce you to him, so you

can get started on your new job?"

Cissie's eyes widened in fright, and she glanced furtively around as though about to run for safety. Then she realized that she could leave here any time she wanted to. She was here of her own free will, even though the conditions causing her presence were almost the worst imaginable. She took a deep breath of determination and looked Roberto Ponci in the eyes as she nodded again.

"He will pay a hundred dollars for a couple of hours of your time now, which will put fifty dollars, at least, into your emergency account. He has been here before, and there has never been any trouble, even though I don't know his particular ideas of fun. Well, Dottie, let's go."

As Bob led Cissie into the bar, he was still chatting with her. Cissie tried to concentrate on what her escort was saying, and thus avoid having to think about what she was committed to now. "There's a wall switch just inside the door of each motel unit. This controls the light outside the door. That light should always be left on. If ever you get into real trouble, just switch that outside light off, and someone will come to your rescue quickly. But only use that signal if you find things are really out of control."

They were now at a table in the bar, and Bob Ponci was saying, "Here's the young lady I was telling you about Jeff. This is Dottie. Why don't you two have a drink and get acquainted? I'll be back in a few minutes and see how you're making out."

Cissie sat down in the chair which the man courteously held for her, and tried to smile as she looked over the man who was to be her first client, or customer, or victim, or whatever he should be called. He was nice looking and well dressed, and Cissie was surprised to find that he seemed in many ways exactly like most of her parents' friends. He was in his forties or so, and obviously able to afford the best, whether in drink or in female

companionship.

"Roberto has excellent taste, I find, Dottie," said Jeff with a quiet smile. "What would you like to drink while we get a little acquainted. Name it and it's yours for the asking."

"Rum and coke is what I usually drink," said Cissie. "Even though it doesn't sound very snooty."

"The perfect drink for a young girl like you," said Jeff, signalling a waiter and placing their order "And I find it hard to believe that I am so lucky as to make your acquaintance like this. There's no doubt as to the purpose of our being introduced, is there?"

Cissie Reynolds' alert mind automatically jumped back to his words of seconds before. "Name it and it's yours for the asking," she repeated lightly as she tried to adjust herself to this strange situation.

She didn't even know his name, and she had only met him just now, but whenever he wanted to, probably in only a few minutes from now, she would be indulging in the most wonderful and terrible intimacies with him. She had never thought she would be doing anything like that with anyone unless she was beautifully and wholly in love with him, but now she was committed to do it with a total stranger. Actually he didn't look too bad, but any man would look awful to her right now. She was for sale, and he was about to buy her. Or at least buy the use of her body for the evening. Then something that Roberto had said a few moments before, popped into her head. The suave swarthy manager had casually remarked that he did not know this Jeff's particular ideas of fun.

What did he mean by that? Was there more than one thing a man could want from a girl when he purchased her services like this? Cissie had done that thing, and was now buying her way out of the results. But what if this Jeff wanted something different? Roberto had said that she should do whatever the customer wanted. Sud-

denly a possible variation on the age-old gymnastic flashed into her mind! But he couldn't expect her to do THAT! She'd never even considered doing it with the boy she thought she had loved. And how could she make herself do it with this stranger?

Just then their drinks arrived, offering a distraction, or Cissie might have leaped up and run for her life. Instead, Jeff raised his glass in a gesture of a toast and said lightly, "May God bless and keep you, Dottie. I'm glad I can afford to," and then sipped his drink.

Cissie tasted her drink, more for something to do than because she thought it would calm her inner turmoil. Then she realized that the Dutch Courage which the drink could give her might help her through the horror of the next few hours. Alcohol does not solve your problems. But it can make having those problems less tragic for the moment. If she could get through this first experience as hired whore, maybe the next ensuing times would not be so bad. Cissie took a deep gulp of her drink, a gesture which did not go un-noticed by the watchful Jeff.

What a perfect girl this Dottie was for satisfying his special tastes, Jeff mused to himself. She did not look any older than about sixteen, with her snug sweater over her high young breast, her loosely waved hair, and the slash of muted lipstick which seemed to be her only make-up. He had noted her as she walked toward him with Ech Ponci, and the adolescent shoes and ankle-socks emphasized her extreme youth. And the way her little young hips twitched with each step under her short skirt. A real doll, and all his for the taking. She looked on the verge of panic or tears, and this excited Jeff even more. Already she was frightened at his male domination, even before she really knew what he would make her do. The hundred dollars that Ponci was asking was higher than Jeff wanted to pay, but this exquisite girl who looked at-

most like a helpless child, would be well worth it. He could feel himself responding to her appeal already. Why didn't Ponci hurry back, so they could get out of the bar and into the motel room?

Presently the manager reappeared at their table and Cissie was not sure whether she was glad to see him or not. His arrival announced the beginning of the end for her, but at least there would be no more of this terrible uncertainty of waiting for the end to come. Bob Ponci smiled his professional smile at both of them and bridged the awkward gap by saying, "While you're in the Ladies' Room, Dottie, I have something to discuss with Jeff. We'll see you when you get back."

Cissie rose and walked away, so she did not see any money change hands, but when she returned, Jeff was eagerly waiting for her. She could feel his hand on her elbow trembling as he guided her out of the bar and led the way toward one of the motel units nearby. The outside light was burning beside the door, as Roberto had told her, and when they went in, Cissie found her eyes identifying the alarm switch on the wall. She almost felt like using it right then, she was so scared, but she knew that she had to go through with her penance, as the only way out of her terrible trouble.

Jeff carefully locked the door behind them, and made sure that all the Venetian blinds were tightly closed. He inspected the adjoining bath, and carefully turned on every light in the little suite. In spite of her shuddering internal panic and disgust, Cissie Reynolds found herself wondering with a strange curiosity what a man did under these circumstances. Did he kiss her? Did he tell the girl that he loved her? Should she pretend that she loved him? How bad was it that her very real fright must show to even the most casual observer?

Then Roberto's advice came to her rescue. Do exactly what the man asks. No more and no less. He must know

what he wants, so she'd wait for instructions.

Jeff stood looking at her for a moment, his gaze taking in every superb detail of her face and form. Then he sat down in an upholstered chair in one corner of the room and said quietly, "Just walk around for me, Dottie. I love the way you walk. It's so young and feminine and excitingly cat-like. I want to look at you and enjoy how lovely you are and see you from every angle."

Cissie obeyed, turning and striding lightly around the room, smiling at him as well as she could make her face respond to her conscious commands. Should she go close to him, or stay far enough away so that he could really see her? Just do what you're told, she reminded herself. If he wants you close, he will ask for it.

"Now sit down there on the bed opposite me, please, Dottie," came his next command. "Brother, but you're excitingly young and beautiful."

Cissie sat down on the bed as ordered, and automatically started to adjust her skirt which had slid up above her knee.

"No. Leave your skirt alone, Dottie. Pretend you don't notice it's showing your thigh a little. Now lean back onto your elbows, as though you were tired," Jeff ordered, his eyes darting all over her revealed body. "That's right. Try to ignore me. Pretend I'm not here in the room at all. Now stand up again and stretch as though you'd had a hard day and wanted to relax."

Cissie obeyed and found that the commanded stretching was indeed welcome to her, to relieve the kinks with her emotional tension had knotted into her muscles and joints. But when was he going to get finished with this strange preamble and get down to the basic things he had hired her for?

"That's right, Dottie. Turn around slowly so I can see you from all sides. Now start to get undressed. Do it very slowly, and keep moving so that I can watch you and

enjoy every move and see you from every angle. Hang up or put away every thing you take off, and don't hurry. Pretend you're all alone, but be sure I don't miss anything." Jeff's voice was soft, but with a tenseness that showed his mounting excitement. His words seemed as much to stimulate himself as to instruct her in her duties of satisfying him.

"First take off your sweater. That's right. Now pull it right side out and hang it up on a hanger. Wow, but your breasts look as if they were about to explode right out of your brassiere. So high and full and firm, like a well-developed teen-ager. Keep moving and turning so I can enjoy every possible view. Even from the back, you're the loveliest girl I've ever seen."

Cissie obeyed, even though she could not understand the ritual which seemed so important to him. Do what you're told, she warned herself. Yours not to wonder why, — your but to do and die. At least he hadn't touched her or wanted anything disgusting. Not yet.

"Now take off your skirt. That's right, Dottie. Stand where I can watch you and see every wiggle as you pull it down over your hips. Now fold it and put it away the way you normally would. Don't hurry. There's so much I have to see of you. Now take off your half-slip, and take your time sliding it slowly down over your hips and then down your beautiful long legs. You're excitingly beautiful just in your bra and panties. They fit so snug and tight over your lovely curves. Now hang up the half-slip and do it slowly while I watch."

Cissie was surprised that she felt little or no embarrassment at disrobing before a man whose name she did not even know. She had braced herself against so much more and worse things that this hardly seemed worth worrying about. And there was something almost hypnotic about doing these essentially commonplace things under such intense directions.

"Oh, you're beautiful, and doing everything exactly right," Jeff's taut voice continued. "Now sit down on the edge of the bed again and take off your shoes and socks. Do it slowly and naturally, and pretend I'm not watching you. I want to love every part of you with my eyes. Be sure to put your shoes and ankle-socks neatly under the bed before you stand up."

Jeff's voice was now so intense, grating with roused passion, that Cissie darted a glance at him. He noted her look and frowned, so she dared not do it again. But she had seen him slouched down in his chair, almost motionless, while his gaze devoured her ravenously.

"Now take off your brassiere, Dottie. Reach around behind to unsnap it, and then let it fall very slowly and excitingly off your shoulders. Toss it onto that chair and now stand up straight and turn very slowly around for me to admire from every side. The air feels cool on your bare breasts, doesn't it? I can see the beautiful effect the coolness is having. Now walk around near me, as if you were looking for something. My, you are perfectly exquisite in every way."

Cissie could sense the mounting passion within him, and she knew that something would have to happen soon. She was terribly ignorant about such things, but she knew that emotional tension could only get so high before it would erupt and die of its own intensity. But she'd do what he told her. That's what she was being paid for.

"We're nearly to the end, Dottie, for you are wearing only your cute tight little panties. Now very slowly take them off, Dottie. Pretend they are very tight and that you have to struggle and wriggle your hips to get the elastic down over them. Keep turning around so I can see you in every changing view. Oh, I can't stand seeing such beauty. It's too much for me to bear. Now slowly and gracefully step out of your panties. That's exactly right,

Dottie. You're wonderful and so deliciously and perfectly beautiful. I can't stand it. It's overwhelming me in sensuous beauty."

Cissie dared not even glance at him, but she knew that Jeff was on the verge of some kind of emotional climax. His voice was so low and tight that he seemed to be jamming the words out between clenched teeth. His breathing was in short rasping moans and his attention was rigidly fastened on her revealed form.

"Now stretch again, Dottie. Way up on your tiptoes, and then turn slowly around all the way. Now very slowly go over and get into that bed. Very slowly, Dottie. Ooooh, you're so beautiful, Dottie. I love beauty. I love you, Dottie, I love you, love you, love you, loooooove."

As she got into bed and pulled the covers up over her nakedness, Cissie Reynolds dared to look at her partner in this strange episode. Jeff was now sitting in the chair as though completely exhausted. There was a smile on his face but all the former tension had gone from him. He was looking at her with ardent affection, but every muscle in his body seemed relaxed and flaccid. Cissie wondered what she was meant to do now, but fell back on doing nothing since she received no orders.

After a moment of utter silence, Jeff shook himself as though to throw off a deep inertia. Slowly he stood up and spoke. "I'll be back in just a minute. Please wait there, Dottie." Then he disappeared into the bath and closed the door.

Cissie felt completely bewildered by what had just taken place. Jeff seemed finished with her. Was this all he wanted from her? This strangely delicate and sophisticated strip-tease? He had made no effort to touch her in any way. He had asked for no lewd posings or actions from her. His language had been worshipful and in no way crude or obscene. And he had seemed completely satisfied with the bizarre scene which he had directed in

such detail.

When she heard him about to leave the bath, Cissie started to pull the bed clothes up to shield her nudity, but then decided against it. The situation had her utterly confused, but maybe he would like to look at her some more, if that his only idea of sensual pleasure. Jeff came out looking his usual neat, poised, gentlemanly self and walked over to stand near the bed. He reached out both hands for hers, and had her rise to stand before him on the carpeted floor. Still holding her hands he leaned forward and gently kissed her lips in a brief salutation of admiration.

"You are really superb, Dottie," he said smiling. "I really appreciate not only your beautiful body but also your grace and your willingness to co-operate in my little idiosyncrasies. I'm going back to the bar now. Would you like to join me there in a few minutes for a drink before I have to be going? I hope you will."

When he left the suite, Cissie stood staring after him in amazement for a few minutes before she started to get dressed. As she combed her hair before the bureau mirror, she found a crisp new twenty-dollar bill lying waiting for her. She stared at it for a while before she folded it into her small purse. Then as she slowly walked across to the bar she tried to calculate calmly the results of her first evening's work.

Primarily, she knew that she had earned seventy dollars toward the sum she needed for the solution to her immediate problem. And instead of shame and horror, she felt only amazement at how she had earned it. Jeff had so emphasized the beauty of their strange episode, rather than any possible lewd carnality, that she had come to accept his criteria for herself. Her initiation into her new job had been startlingly inoffensive. Somehow Cissie felt that she liked this man who obviously found her so satisfying to his unusual tastes.

On Sunday morning when Susie Perkins and her mother and Norma Allen had breakfast at the Perkins' home, all three women seemed in much brighter and more cheerful moods than usual for them. It was a lovely Spring morning and Mother Perkins was fairly bubbling over with gracious hospitality and friendliness.

"It's so nice that Susie has found a really good friend among the girls over at college," she said as they sat down to eat. "All the other girls seem to be so concerned with going out with boys that I feel that Susie is left out and missing a lot of fun."

"You're right about most of them," said Norma smoothly. "They're so busy with dates and trying to catch a husband that they hardly have time even to tend to their studies."

"Little do they know what they're getting into," replied Mother Perkins ominously. "And most of them won't listen when I've tried to warn them against all men. But at least I've been able to keep my Susie safe from those dangers, haven't I, dear?"

"Yes, Mother. Even though I sometimes feel that you worry too much about me. Like last night," said Susie. "After all, you must admit that Charlie Griffiths is harmless. And Norma was with us after we left the movies, so I was well guarded."

Norma and Susie let their eyes meet in a glance of loving conspiracy, a tender reminder of the exquisite ecstasies they had enjoyed in each other's arms in Susie's bed after their return from the Silver Palm. Then the Physical Education teacher spoke up, further ingratiating herself with Mrs. Perkins.

"I find it very refreshing to see that you are not like most mothers of college-age daughters, Mrs. Perkins. Those mothers must realize the horrors they are forcing

ir girls into. But just because of social pressures and chance for financial security, they practically insist at the girls marry and become little better than wives to satisfy the savage lusts of the husbands who have bought them. But we three know the true state of things in marriage, and are able to avoid it successfully."

Susie was delighted that Norma and Mother were becoming such good friends. By herself Mother was sort of a pessimistic, fear-ridden, worry-wart, always alarmed at the possibility of danger to her daughter. But Norma, with the same antagonism toward men, had shown Susie that there could be a gay, happy, and wonderfully exciting side to an exclusively feminine way of life. Her body was not something to be ashamed of because it aroused vile passions in men. Her body was something to be proud of, and from which, under Norma's expert tutelage, she could experience the wildest sensual pleasures.

Norma, too, was pleased and excited at the way things were working out. Brad Morrison had definitely been eliminated as possible competition for Susie's affections and bodily charms. Charlie Griffiths was of no significance in any way. And Susie's mother was either completely ignorant of Lesbian activities, or else chose to ignore them as a lesser of two evils for her child.

"I have a wonderful idea," said Mother Perkins as she cleared away the breakfast dishes after the meal. "It's such a lovely day, let's pack a big basket of lunch and drive out into the country for a picnic somewhere."

"That sounds perfect," enthused Susie. "Just the three of us. We can have lots of fun. What do you say, Norma?"

"I really ought to be getting back to college," replied Norma seriously. But then she looked over at Susie, and the prospect of spending the whole day with her divine little doll was too much temptation. "But I'll come with you. I don't know if it's Spring Fever, or just that I enjoy your company, but a picnic will be the best possible

way to spend the day."

An hour later the three women, in Norma's convertible with the top down so they could bask in the sun and the warm breeze, were driving along a highway bordered with blossoming wild flowers. The neat fields were a rich young green and seemed to beckon to the vacationers to come enjoy their lush freshness and cool privacy. On the back seat was a large hamper full of food, and at Norma's suggestion it even contained a bottle of wine, usually reserved by Mother Perkins for solemn and formal occasions.

Well out of town Norma turned off the highway at random onto a narrow country lane which paralleled a cool clear stream. After driving along beside pastures and the wooded bank of the stream, the lane faded out of existence, and they found themselves in an open grassy glen, partially hidden by trees. It was an ideal spot for a picnic, and they stopped the car and unloaded the hamper. Then the three of them strolled together off through the woods and fields, soaking up the fresh air and cool, sun-baked freedom of their pastoral paradise. An hour or so later they were back at the car, with brisk appetites and cheerfully gay feelings.

Upon Norma's insistence, they all had several paper cups of wine to sharpen their appetites and increase their sense of well-being, and then they dug enthusiastically into the food. A feeling of care-free comradeship pervaded them and they all remarked what a success the picnic idea was. After eating they all sat around sleepily on the car-robe to enjoy the wonderful time they were having.

After several minutes of silent contemplation of the bucolic surroundings, Norma gently nudged Susie and pointed to the third member of their little group. Mother Perkins was stretched out on the lap-robe, her head propped against the hamper, sound asleep, as a result of the fresh air, the wine, and the heavy lunch.

Norma rose silently and beckoned Susie to follow her a few steps from the dozing woman. "Let's take a walk now. Just by ourselves, Susie. Your mother can snooze for a little while all right."

Susie smiled at this evidence of Norma's continuing affection and attention, and silently followed as they strolled off into the trees along the stream, arm in arm. The little blonde girl felt a deep inner satisfaction that she had at last discovered someone who could really love her. Norma was not like Mother, who seemed primarily concerned with keeping her from harm, and this meant seriously limiting all her activities. Mother was long on worrying but usually very short on having fun.

But Norma had clearly demonstrated that she ~~could~~ effectively keep Susie safe under any conditions. Last night she had not only kept her out of harm's way ~~from~~ both Brad and Charlie, but had not even allowed ~~him~~ to be obligated to either man in the matter of ~~drinks~~ drinks. And there could be no question but ~~that~~ ~~Norma~~ was both willing and able to provide Susie with ~~these~~ exquisite sensual thrills when they indulged in ~~the~~ ~~student~~ love making. This was so completely ~~different~~ the humiliating assaults which Mother ~~was~~ ~~preventing~~ ~~her~~ ~~from~~ ~~having~~ ~~her~~ ~~against~~ ~~and~~ ~~which~~ ~~she~~ ~~had~~ ~~never~~ ~~before~~ ~~with~~ ~~Brad~~.

As the two girls wandered ~~along~~ ~~the~~ ~~stream~~ ~~arm~~ ~~crept~~ ~~around~~ ~~Susie's~~ ~~side~~ ~~and~~ ~~she~~ ~~could~~ ~~enjoy~~ ~~this~~ ~~further~~ ~~evidence~~ ~~of~~ ~~Norma's~~ ~~affection~~ ~~and~~ ~~attention~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~girls~~ ~~walked~~ ~~along~~ ~~the~~ ~~stream~~ ~~arm~~ ~~in~~ ~~arm~~ ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~stopped~~ ~~each~~ ~~other~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~girls~~ ~~stopped~~.

"Look Susie. There's a ~~place~~ ~~clear~~ ~~and~~ ~~deep~~ ~~and~~ ~~you~~ ~~can~~ ~~take~~ ~~a~~ ~~quick~~ ~~swim~~."

"Well, I don't ~~know~~ ~~if~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~swim~~ ~~very~~ ~~well~~ ~~but~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~want~~ ~~to~~ ~~swim~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~place~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~so~~ ~~dark~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~know~~ ~~if~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~swim~~ ~~very~~ ~~well~~ ~~but~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~want~~ ~~to~~ ~~swim~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~place~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~so~~ ~~dark~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~know~~ ~~if~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~swim~~ ~~very~~ ~~well~~ ~~but~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~want~~ ~~to~~ ~~swim~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~place~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~so~~ ~~dark~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~know~~ ~~if~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~swim~~ ~~very~~ ~~well~~ ~~but~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~want~~ ~~to~~ ~~swim~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~place~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~so~~ ~~dark~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~know~~ ~~if~~ ~~I~~ ~~can~~ ~~swim~~ ~~very~~ ~~well~~ ~~but~~ ~~I~~ ~~don't~~ ~~want~~ ~~to~~ ~~swim~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~place~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~so~~ ~~dark~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ 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someone might see us. What would Mother think?"

"No one could see us. We'll just take a quick dip. We won't have to tell your mother if you think she wouldn't like it. Come on, Little Doll. It will be lots of fun."

Even as she finished speaking, Norma was rapidly stripping off her clothes and piling them neatly on the grass. Then in her slimly rounded nakedness she was frantically helping Susie disrobe and admiring each lovely detail of femininity as it was revealed. Then, dainty and graceful as two wood-nymphs, the girls approached the edge of the pool, hand in hand, and tested the water with their toes.

"Oooh. It's cold," squealed Susie gaily, clutching at Norma to keep her balance.

"Don't be such a baby," laughed Norma. "Come on in. Here I go."

Norma's slim trained body formed a dynamic arc and entered the clear cool water with scarcely a splash. She surfaced yards away near the center of the limpid pool and shook her wet hair out of her face.

"Come on, Little Susie. Don't be afraid. Come out here with me, and let me tell you again how lovely and exciting you are."

Under these inducements Susie slowly waded into the water and swam out toward her friend. She tried to keep her blonde hair dry while the chill of the water sent shivery thrills flashing all over her skin. She glanced apprehensively around the shore of the pool to make certain that there was no chance of their being observed swimming all nude like this by some farmer or another picnicker.

When Susie drew near, Norma reached out and gently pulled the little body toward her. The older girl tenderly wrapped her arms around Susie and then fervently kissed the wetly pouting lips of the petite blonde. Again their lips met and this time their kiss was longer and

more impassioned.

"What a place to be making love," murmured Susie partly thrilled and partly alarmed at what was taking place. "What if anyone should see us? It would be awful."

"Don't you worry about anything like that," Norma assured her, increasing the tempo of her caresses. "Nobody would ever see us. And anywhere in the world is a perfect spot for me to show you how much I love you. And to give you the nicest and most thrilling pleasures I can think of. Just relax and let the cool water support you. Then I can love you and caress you. Let yourself go, darling, so the wonderful sensations can flow all through you and over you and engulf you in my love. And if you want to do this, — — — and this, — — — to me at the same time, I'll love it as much as you do when I do them to you, my sweet."

They were floating in the center of the pool, when they heard a distant voice calling.

Susie stiffened in alarm and said, "That's Mother. She woke up and is wondering where we are. We've got to go find her before she gets lost or something."

A frown of disappointment passed over Norma's face as she realized that their sensual interlude was ended. The two girls swam quickly ashore and called out to Mrs. Perkins as they hastily tried to dry themselves. They were nearly dressed when the older woman stumbled toward them.

"Are you both all right. I was so worried. I woke up and found myself all alone there. I had no idea what might have happened to you two young girls. What happened? You're both all wet?"

"Yes, Mother," answered Susie placatingly, trying to hide the warm physical excitement which still coursed so alarmingly through her whole body. "We found this pool and decided to take a dip in it."

"With no clothes on?" demanded Mrs. Perkins in hor-

ror. "Why, there's no telling who might have come by and seen you. Any man might have tried to do awful things if he had caught you helpless like that."

"You don't have to worry, Mrs. Perkins," Norma assured her. "I was with Susie, and I'm sure I could have handled any situation that came up. Susie is safe with me, you can be sure."

Then the three women walked slowly back toward the car and the nearly empty lunch-basket. Mrs. Perkins was still grumbling about the danger the girls might have encountered, but Norma made convincing replies.

Susie was unusually quiet right then, and continued to be occupied with her own thoughts even when they were driving back to Indian Falls. She was thinking of the strange pagan episode with Norma in the pool, but the main cause of her preoccupation was the hot tumult which still swirled within her body. Flames had been lit within her that had not been allowed to flare up into scorching release. And now they continued to scald and aggravate her in a manner that was half torment and half ecstasy. Would this feeling of unspent urges continue indefinitely? Would she have to wait until Norma again offered to quench these emotional flames? Was there any chance that her mother would be able to recognize the symptoms which teased and stimulated her child? Susie was in a holocaust of conflicting and alarming feelings, and wondered if she would ever feel calm and serene again.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

When Brad Morrison left the Indian Falls high school after teaching his last class for the afternoon, he found Carol Brandon waiting for him in his car.

"Hello, Brad. I've been waiting long enough. We've got some talking to do. To get our stories straight as far as my father is concerned."

"We sure do, Carol," he replied seriously, getting in beside her. "That's why I phoned you last night. I had a most surprising talk with your father yesterday."

"So he told me when I got in very late last night. I said I'd been out with you, even though I hadn't, of course. I've been using you as an excuse when I've been staying out late recently. He seems to like you, after seeing you yesterday, so keep on covering for me, will you?"

"There's a lot more to it than that, Carol," Brad told her. "I don't know what you've been telling him about us, but he's got it all arranged for us to get formally engaged and then get married this summer."

"My God! He must have taken me seriously," said Carol airily. Then she looked up appraisingly at the big husky man beside her. After studying him for a minute and remembering their one intimate session together, she added, "Well, it might not be a bad idea at that."

"What do you mean? It's impossible, Carol," replied Brad heatedly. "We hardly know each other, and we certainly aren't in love."

"No, but we have fun together in the one important way that makes any difference. And if you'd agree not to cramp my style in having fun playing around, I'll promise not to get in your hair either. A deal like that would work for both of us."

"But that's no way to start a marriage," Brad protested vigorously.

"It would be the best way for us. And besides, think of all that Dad has offered to do for you in advancing your career and helping you get somewhere. And what's the matter with me as a wife? Don't you think I'm good in bed? If you don't, you can find lots of fellows who do. I agree with you, Brad Mon."

married."

"I'll bet you could make me very happy for a little while this afternoon, Brad. Let's go out to the Silver Palm right now, and I'll show you how."

"Having fun in bed isn't all of marriage. You ought to know that. We've got to get this misunderstanding straightened out somehow."

"Well, you straighten it out any way you can. But if you start squealing on me to my father about the thing I do, I'll have some things to tell him too. I'll say you seduced me and now won't marry me because I'm not good enough to be your wife. You can guess how pleased Dad would be to hear that about his darling innocent daughter, can't you? How long do you think you could stay alive around here after I told him that?"

"You wouldn't lie to him like that, Carol."

"The hell I wouldn't, to protect myself. If you don't believe me, just try it. I'm going to be out at the Silver Palm tonight for some new kicks. I told Dad I was going to be with you, so don't you start telling him anything different, if you know what's good for you."

Brad started to object to this arrogant treatment from her, but Carol jumped out of his car and then leaned in through the window to have the last word. "It just occurred to me that we really ought to get married. I think I'll really enjoy having a nice docile husband around. One who won't be able to say anything, no matter what I do, or who I do it with. That would be a real kick, having a nice obedient husband, like a pet dog."

Then she spun away and hurried to her car which was parked nearby. The gravel spurted from under her tires as she whipped the car around and sped out of the parking lot. Brad just sat there in his car and wondered in desperation if he would ever be able to get out of this mess. And if there was any possible chance of his ever getting Susie for his own loving wife.

And at the same time, late this afternoon, Susie was also sitting and wondering. Norma had promised to meet her after classes, and while waiting Susie was nearly being driven crazy by the waves of unquenched fire which still flickered tormentingly through her young body. It had only been a couple of days since the internal conflagration had been started during their uncompleted moments in the pool, but it seemed to the newly awakened senses of the little blonde that she had been suffering the tortures of the damned through all eternity.

Everything she did, every movement she made, every word she heard, somehow reminded her of her unsatisfied emotions and the insistent demands of her aroused body. If only Norma would come home, she would be able to relieve Susie's burning tensions in the most satisfying way possible. In the meanwhile Susie could only sit and squirm and shift and fidget restlessly while she waited.

Susie had no way of knowing about the conversation which Norma had overheard at lunchtime, a conversation which aroused the slim dark-haired Lesbian to a fever-pitch of curiosity and eagerness to investigate. Two men at the next table during lunch had been guardedly discussing the availability of girls at the Silver Palm, and it had taken some careful listening and piecing together of clues before Norma was sure of her information.

If the intimate personal services of girls could be bought by men at the night club and motel, those same services should be equally available to another girl. Like every confirmed member of the Lesbian sisterhood, Norma was always on the look-out for new fields of Sapphic pleasure to harvest for her distorted enjoyment. There was no doubt that Susie Perkins was cute and eager to learn, but why should Norma be limited to just one source of exotic entertainment? And suppose that Susie changed her mind or was too much under her

mother's narrow-minded domination. Then where would Norma be? And with her basically masculine approach to sensuality, Norma felt that novelty was desirable for its own sake. Just because she had one satisfactory partner for her twisted passions, did not mean that she should avoid all other possible outlets for her desires. The services available at the Silver Palm should be at least investigated, if not actually sampled. She'd do it this afternoon, and probably be back in time to meet Susie as she had agreed to do. If Susie had to swelter in her own self-created heat for a little longer, Norma would not be seriously bothered.

By the time that Norma got out to the Silver Palm it was late in the afternoon. She entered and was about to take a seat at the bar when she spotted Bob Ponci, the tall, satanically attractive manager, talking earnestly to a cute girl who looked vaguely familiar. Norma walked slowly toward the couple and presently Ponci noticed her.

"Can I help you in any way, Miss?" asked the manager courteously.

"I think so. When you have a few minutes free," replied Norma coolly, glancing at the girl with whom Bob had been talking. What a figure she had. And looked so young and half-scared. She might be fun, some time, if she was one of the girls who could be rented.

"Of course, Miss. Immediately," said the manager with continental grace in his bow. Then he turned to the other girl and said, "Excuse me for a little while, Dottie. We can finish our talk later."

Then to the newcomer he said, "I am at your service Miss." While his attention looked her over carefully. He had seen her somewhere, Bob knew. But what could she want now?

"My name is Norma," she told him bluntly. "I was here a while ago with Brad Morrison, whom you know."

"Oh, yes. Of course. I can place you now," replied Bob

smoothly. "A party of four with Mr. Morrison."

"That's right. But what I want now is quite different. It has no connection, I'm sure, with Brad Morrison. I have heard that girls are available here. If a person can pay for their services."

"This is indeed a surprise, Miss Norma," said Bob as he remembered his original opinion that this particular girl probably had abnormal desires. "I'm not sure that we understand each other completely."

"I think we do. Don't try to con me, Roberto, or whatever your name is. You can level with me about this. I'll tell you frankly that I want a girl. I want a girl who will do what she's told. To entertain me. Can I get one here now? That's all I want to know. I want a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. Not a run-around. That girl you were just talking to, for instance."

"You speak very plainly and bluntly, Miss Norma," said Bob, still studying her and trying to make up his mind about her. As a matter of fact, Cissie Reynolds was the only girl around so early. She had not come in to work, but only to find out from him how she was making out in her goal of five hundred quick dollars, and the possibility of contacting the doctor who would handle her abortion when she had accumulated the money. Maybe here was a chance for her to pick up some more cash for a Lesbian session with this strangely abrupt customer.

"Well, can we make a deal for the next hour or so, or not?" demanded Norma. "I told you I want a blunt answer to a blunt question. Yes or No for that girl?"

"I am ashamed to admit that you have caught me a little off guard and unprepared," said Ponci apologetically. "This is a situation that only has come up rarely. And never with this particular girl. I will have to ask her if she is willing to accommodate you."

"Don't con me, I told you. Will you or won't you sup-

ply what I'm willing to pay for," insisted Norma.

"I am certain that I can supply the service you wish sometime this evening, Miss Norma," said Ponci calmly. "But as for this girl, I will have to inquire. Will you have a drink at the bar as my guest while I find out if this girl is available right now?"

With Norma established at the bar, Roberto Ponci called Cissie Reynolds into the private office of the night club. Ever since he had first met her, Bob had been fascinated by her exquisite feminine allure and by her stoic acceptance of what fate had ordained for her. Bob had been well aware of the bizarre ritual expected by Cissie's first client, and he had intentionally made her indoctrination into commercialized sex an easy one, by exposing her only to Jeff's requirements for an aesthetic strip-tease, rather than to some customer who would be brutally demanding in having her submit to his assault.

Somehow the sophisticated and blase manager had come to feel a strong liking for the girl, and he was determined to have her work out her period of money-making with the least possible difficulty and shock to her. If she wanted to have a go with this confessed dyke, she could. In Cissie's opinion, this might be less traumatic than taking on a man who would want more normal cooperation from her to satisfy his urges. It was up to Cissie to decide, but in any event Bob Ponci would feel less guilty for having given her a choice in the matter.

"Yes, Roberto. Have you figured out how much I have earned?" asked Cissie as she entered the office. "Somehow I hardly feel that I am earning what the men have paid. As I've told you, no one has actually touched me yet in any really bad way. That Jeff just wanted to watch me undress, and old Mr. Gordon found that just hugging and kissing me was more than he could stand."

"I know," said Bob briefly.

"Then you've been giving me men you knew were easy.

to satisfy? You've been making this job easy for me intentionally?" she asked.

Roberto nodded, wondering to himself why he had done so. He must be very careful not to get personally involved with any of the girls working for him. He had never abused his power over them by asking for free favors. And he must not jeopardize the success of the business by showing favoritism, either.

"Why? Do you help all the new girls like this?"

"No, I don't, Dottie," replied Bob slowly. "It's just that somehow I didn't want to think of you being forced by some man, — any man. I wouldn't feel right about it, even though you are working here willingly."

"Hardly willingly, But it's the only way I could think of to get the money I need, fast."

"I realize that. What I meant was that I'm not keeping you here. You can quit any time you want to. But I know that working here like this must be much worse for you than for most of the other girls. You're a different type, — one of the few really nice girls I've ever known."

Cissie Reynolds looked at the manager for a long moment, trying to decide how to take his remarks. Was he really being friendly? Or was this just a build-up to his asking for something for himself for her? Even though she could not really admire any man who made his living in the half-world of a night club and hotel, she was glad that he seemed genuinely fond of her. If she had wanted to take advantage of her position and helplessness, he could have done so long before this. But he had gone out of his way to make her comfortable and free from brutal unpleasantness as possible. In a word, she said of thanks. Cissie stood on tiptoes and gave the young man a quick kiss.

need something to buck up my morale. Also I really appreciate what you've done to keep my experience here as mild and undisturbing as possible. If I can do anything for you anytime, please let me know. I'll be glad to — —.

Cissie stopped abruptly as she realized the crude interpretation which Roberto could put on her words. He might think that she was willingly offering herself to him in return for more special treatment in her job.

"Don't worry, Dottie," Bob told her gently. "I know how you meant it. I won't take it wrong in any way. But that brings up the main reason why I asked you in here just now. It's about a client who wants you right now."

"Right now?" asked Cissie as a surge of fright clamped its icy grip on her whole body.

"Yes. And in a way it's another special type of client. It's a woman. The slim dark woman who came in while you and I were talking outside. And she asked for you particularly."

"A woman? And she wants me for *that*?" gasped Cissie in amazement and alarm. "But, what does she want me to — —? I mean what will I have to — —? I mean, how can two women — — —?"

"I have no definite ideas about what she wants Dottie," Bob told the startled girl quietly. "That's up to her. But she is willing to pay for your services. If you want to earn the money, you'll have to do what she asks as usual. I just thought that she might be less disturbing to you than a normal man and what he will probably want from you. The decision is up to you, Dottie. If you don't want to try it, I can tell her that you're not available right now, and let her have some other girl later."

Cissie hesitated while tumultuous thoughts whirled through her mind. She had committed herself to this way of life, knowing full well what would be involved. She could not expect Roberto to keep on protecting her and giving her harmless clients indefinitely. And terrible as

submitting to another woman might be, it would be less disgusting than being used by a man.

"All right, Roberto," she replied quietly. "I'll take her on. It can't be any worse than the things I've already resigned myself to enduring."

"That's the right attitude, Dottie," said Bob encouragingly. "So let's get it started. The sooner you start, the sooner it will be over. This job, and your whole plan."

Norma's predatory eye saw the manager and the exquisitely feminine and desirable girl come out of what was evidently the office of the establishment. As they approached, Norma gulped down the last of her drink and smiled at them. Bob performed the introductions.

"Miss Norma, this is Dottie, a friend of mine. I think you two girls may have some interests in common to discuss, possibly things that should be talked over in 'privacy.'" Then he spoke directly to Norma, saying, "If this is so, I'll speak with you before you go to your motel, of course." Then he walked away.

"Are you 'with it' for a 'gay' party, Dottie?" asked Norma quietly as she surveyed the exquisitely feminine beauty of the girl before her.

"I'm afraid I'm not. I'm new here, but I make out all right by doing whatever my 'friend' asks," replied Cissie soberly, hoping that this quizzing would not go on. It was bad enough knowing that you had to do something you found horrible, but talking about it beforehand only made it worse.

"You are a really beautiful girl, Dottie. And I think we could have lots of fun together."

"I'll try to please you, Norma," said Cissie trying to hide the panic and disgust which she felt.

"All right. You stay here while I see that *man*," ordered Norma, giving Cissie's hand an intimate squeeze. "I'll be right back, and then we can be alone together. I think you'll like it dear."

Norma argued briefly with Bob Ponci about the fee demanded for Cissie's services, but presently she came back, holding the key to one of the motel units. As the two girls walked from the bar, Cissie was surprised to have Norma guide her by the arm, as if Norma was a man assisting a fragile girl.

Once in the motel, with the door locked behind them, Norma again studied her new and unknown partner, while Cissie tried to conceal the feelings which churned violently within her. Lesbianism was going to be an experience that Cissie had not counted on in even her most terrible visions of what she would encounter. And now that her initiation was imminent, Cissie was getting less and less sure that she should have taken on this bizarre assignment. She really needed the money, certainly, but did she have to pay this price for it?

Norma now stepped forward and embraced her purchased partner, kissing her ardently on the lips. The confirmed Lesbian was disappointed when she felt no welcoming response from Cissie, and stepped back to inspect her critically again.

"Try to react to me more, Dottie," ordered Norma. "And you might as well start getting undressed now, so you'll be ready for me."

"Of course," replied Cissie and turned away to obey even as her stomach clenched in disgust. She had agreed to this, so now she had to go through with it. But was it going to be any less terrible than having a man use her to satisfy his animal instincts? Cissie was not sure, but she knew she would be finding out very soon.

"Now lie down on the bed, so I can really begin to find out how lovely you are," commanded Norma when the younger girl stood nude and waiting before her. With her eyes glued to the excitingly revealed perfection of Cissie's body, Norma now started to remove her own clothing.

When she had stripped down to just her panties, Norma went over and sat on the edge of the bed. Her hands went out to test the beauty which her eyes had already enjoyed. Cissie closed her eyes to shut out the disturbing picture of being so intimately stimulated by another female. Desperately the younger girl tried to keep from flinching away from Norma's loving and searching fingers.

As it kept up, Cissie realized that her whole body was tensed in a knotted spasm of revulsion. Where there should have been no feeling of violated modesty between two girls, there was the other and worse sensation of suffering under distorted and twisted sensual lusts. This was more disturbing than even the animal violence of some sex-starved male seeking to alleviate his natural urges.

"Now you make love to me, Dottie dear," ordered Norma, sinking down on the bed beside her companion. "Do anything that you think I'll like."

"Oh, I can't — —. I mean, Yes, Norma. Anything you say," moaned Cissie, determined to force herself into completing this assignment.

Still keeping her eyes shut, and with obvious reluctance, Cissie began. Her jaws were clamped shut in her effort to control herself. At first Cissie did little, but Norma impatiently urged her on to more intimate activities, and was trying to excite Cissie as a guide to what she, herself, would enjoy. But Cissie could not bring herself to reciprocate with similar gestures until Norma's displeasure became evident. Then Cissie remembered that the basic requirement for her was to do what she was told, as the only way to earn her money. Then with a shudder and moan of utter misery and disgust, Cissie began to comply.

After a few moments of this mutual interplay Norma rolled over in preparation for more intimacies. Only

then did the foolishness of what she was doing sink into Norma's consciousness. Why had she let herself be carried away like this, just from overhearing a private conversation between two unknown men at lunch? Did she fancy herself so masculine in her attitude that she could take over and duplicate a man in his perpetual search for new outlets for his passions? This that she was now doing was not love in any sense. It was only a cheap imitation of what animalistic men did. Did she, who hated and despised all men, want to ape them in the most terrible and bestial moments? And with a girl who was obviously not enjoying it, even though she was obedient? No That was not the role of a true Lesbian. She should only indulge in these beautiful activities with someone she loved and who welcomed them eagerly. No with a hired whore.

Norma jumped up from the bed and stared down at the surprised girl beneath her. Then the older girl quickly started to dress.

"What's the matter, Norma?" asked Cissie in alarm. "I'm trying to do what you told me to do. Don't you like it? I'll try to do better."

"No. Never mind," said Norma abruptly, still dressing. "It's not your fault, I suppose. You did the best you could. I suppose I shouldn't have tried to have my kind of fun except with someone else like me."

As Cissie watched, Norma finished dressing and stood by the door looking back. "You might as well get dressed too. I'm going back to the bar now. Maybe a drink will make me feel better. I don't think anything could make me feel any worse. I'll have to be going soon. I'm late for a date already."

Cissie Reynolds stared at the closed door for several minutes after Norma left before she could pull herself together enough to start putting on her clothes.

nice to her in this business relationship was no excuse for letting him get any personal ideas about her. And just because he was magnetically handsome didn't have to mean that she was getting interested in him.

The next several hours were relatively calm and uneventful at the Silver Palm. Norma stayed at the bar ignoring the fact that she knew she should have met Susie long ago, and tried to drink away her disappointment and her disgust with herself and the whole world. Bob Ponci circulated around the large building, making decisions and giving orders to the employees as necessary to insure the smooth and profitable operation of the place. Cissie kept out of sight as much as possible, wondering and worrying whether or not there would be any demand for her services.

About ten o'clock, when things were beginning to pick up for the evening rush, Bob was standing near the entrance when he saw a single man walking in toward him. From the man's manner of walking, Bob suspected that he had already been drinking more than was good for him, especially since he must be driving. Just my luck that this guy spends his money somewhere else getting drunk, and comes here to make trouble.

The new-comer lurched to a stop in front of the manager and looked vaguely up at him.

"Can I help you, sir?" asked Bob with his best professional manner. Often with drunks, they would behave like gentlemen as long as you treated them like gentlemen. And Bob thought that he had seen this fellow somewhere before, probably right here at the club. Then Bob identified the man, if you could call him that. It was the fellow who had been Brad Morrison one time. The same night that the Lesbian, Norma, had been in the same party. Better be sure those two didn't see each other, or there might be fireworks.

The new comer looked vaguely up into the manager's

face and then his expression cleared as he saw the need for making the necessary experiment. It had been a great internal struggle, but Charlie Griffiths was going to find out, once and for all, whether or not he was a man.

"You run this place? A friend of Morrison's. Brad Morrison's?" he said, half in question and half in assertion. This strikingly handsome man before him was staring at him as though he could look deep into Charlie's writhing tortured soul. If Charlie was going to follow through on his determination to prove himself a man by hiring the services of a girl, he knew he had to keep moving fast now. Any pause in the schedule of action he had planned, and Charlie would never get up the courage again to make the test.

When Bob Ponci continued to look at him without confirming nor denying what Charlie had said, that young fellow nearly faltered in his determination. The several drinks he had just consumed were giving him a false courage of sorts, but this quiet and knowledgeless man before him was dampening his nerve. Charlie moved ahead.

"I know you have girls here. In the motel room I have to have one now. I mean I need a girl now — — to —. I need one, Right now."

Without answering, the manager led this strange customer away from the entrance. Take him out of sight away from public view, especially through the door gave Bob a chance to size up the situation and figure out how to handle it. The fellow wasn't really drunk, he certainly was very upset about something. For the frantic eagerness of a man who has been out long without the solace and relief of a woman. I can see the fright of a soldier about to go into a battle from which he did not expect to emerge alive. Brad Morrison's, Bob would try to make the

"I think I can arrange to help you."

Mr. — — ?" said Bob, still stalling for time.

Charlie just looked at him in scared intensity, and then said quickly, "Now. It has to be right now."

"Yes sir. I understand," said Bob, willing to help out this strange friend of Brad's. "And what is your name, sir?"

"It's Charlie. Charlie Griffiths," said that young man in rising panic. His courage and determination would not last out much longer, he knew. "Please hurry. I have to hurry or it will be too late."

"Of course, sir. And what type of girl would you like? We try to satisfy our customers, you know."

"It doesn't make any difference. Really it doesn't," said Charlie in mounting panic. Then he reached into a pocket and hauled out a thick roll of money which he thrust into Bob's hand. "I can pay. This should cover it. But please don't make me wait or it won't do any good. Don't talk or anything. Just hurry."

Bob quickly led the distraught young man out through a side-door of the bar and over to one of the motel units.

"Just stay here for a minute or so, Mr. Griffiths," the manager told Charlie after opening the door with his pass key. "Make yourself comfortable, and I'll have someone here to take care of you in a few seconds."

As he hurried back alone to the night club, Bob made a quick count of the money which Charlie had given him. Whew! ! Nearly two hundred dollars. And the guy was so steamed up he'd acted as if he was all ready to explode at the slightest touch. Now what girl was free so she could go quench this guy's fire right away!

The manager entered the night club through the kitchen, and the first person he set eyes on was Cissie Reynolds who, as Dottie the call-girl, was getting more and more nervous from idle waiting. She was just the perfect girl for this job. Cute, had class, not busy right now, and needed the money.

be frightened. A strange man standing naked over me. A man who has bought the right to use me in any way he wants. But it almost seems as if he doesn't want me, or at least doesn't know what he wants from me.

Then the original basic instructions came to her rescue. Do what you're told. The customer must know what he wants or he wouldn't be paying for it. Cissie began to undress, slowly and reluctantly.

Charlie backed away till he felt the edge of a chair behind his knees, and then slowly sat down. He watched with a morbid fascination as the girl rose from her horizontal position on the bed. The soft sweater came up and off, and the girl shook her head to settle the soft waves of her hair which had become disturbed. Her white bra contrasted with the warm pink of her bare skin, and Charlie looked with vague interest but no inner feeling of excitement at the cups which seemed barely able to contain her full breasts. Just like a two-piece or Bikini swim-suit at the beach, thought Charlie. But, so what? Women had breasts. They were a biological necessity in primitive cultures, but here and now they should have an emotional impact on him. But they didn't.

Now the girl was stepping out of her skirt and half-slip, which she hung neatly over the arm of the same chair which held his jacket. She was standing before him in her obviously full bra and snug panties, and Charlie found himself studying her with a purely academic interest. Women certainly were neater and more streamlined than men, he thought. Smoother and with uninterrupted curves. Charlie felt a moment of envy and jealousy at being physically a male.

He was about to repeat, "Your shoes," when the girl sat down on the edge of the bed and began working on her feet. Charlie's eyes followed the long tapering lines of her exposed thighs, but his feelings were of artistic and jealous appreciation, not of desire.

Now she stood before him and reached behind her to

release the catch of her brassiere. When the small intimate garment came off and he could see her nude breasts with their pink summits, Charlie stared and knew that their message had no meaning for him. The girl kept glancing at him, as though to watch his reactions or get further instructions. After draping her bra across the chair, she began to drag her dainty panties down over her full hips.

A disconcerting thought flashed through Charlie's mind. Why couldn't he be allowed to wear delicate and sleek panties like those. They would feel so much nicer. And look so much more attractive. He paused at this thought. Attractive to whom? Who would see them and be delighted by them if he wore such things? Charlie quickly closed the door on that avenue of thought.

Now the girl stood naked before him, but Charlie could not bring himself to give the next command. He tried to study her exposed body, but found it vaguely distasteful to him so he glanced away. As the tentative silence stretched out alarmingly between them, the girl slowly turned away and shuffled toward the bed.

Driven by his hopeful search for identification in his masculinity, Charlie rose and followed her. She sat down, and as he hovered over her, the girl lay back and looked up at him questioningly. Now he must act. Now began the real proof which he sought. Anyone could do what he had done so far. Now he must show, to the girl, but most important, to himself, whether or not he was a man.

He studied her displayed body, trying to feel some reaction to her nakedness and availability. He tried to imagine doing anything and everything to and with her. With his hands. With his mouth. With — —.

With a puzzled frown of insecurity, the girl reached her arms up toward him, as if inviting him to join her. To join her? To join with her? To — —

His eyes could see. If he wished, his fingers and his

lips could test freely. But that was all. There was no feeling inside. No reaction to her exposed and willing purchased femininity. In this first test of himself, Charlie knew that he had failed. He was not a man.

With a wild sob of anguish and cruel defeat, he threw himself upon her and limply rolled over onto the bed beside her trembling form. He whimpered deep in his throat and his whole body heaved as tears of terrible frustration flowed on his cheeks. He dared not even consider what his failure meant. Black despair enveloped him like a tidal-wave, and he wished for death.

The girl reached out a hand and touched his pain-racked shoulder tenderly. He flung off her gesture of help. Nothing could help him now. And certainly nothing she could say or do. She was a woman. His envy of her and her emotional rights scalded him bitterly.

"No. Don't touch me," he spat, rolling away from the contamination of her touch. "Go away. Get dressed and get out of here. Leave me alone. I hate you. — hate you."

Slowly Cissie rose from the bed and went to get her clothes. As she dressed she glanced at Charlie from time to time. Somehow her intuition told her that he did not really hate her.

He only hated himself.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A lone woman drinking heavily at a bar can be a source of lots of trouble for everybody concerned, and Roberto Ponci knew it very well. As he performed his other duties of seeing that the night club was ready for the expected customers that evening, he looked in at frequent intervals to see how Norma was making out.

Slowly but continuously she kept drinking, but she was paying for each drink as she got it and was not yet bothering any of the few other customers at the bar this early, so Bob was content to let her stay. As he walked past her on one tour of inspection, she reached out and

grasped his arm.

"You must be a pretty smart cookie, Roberto, to get away with running a set-up like this," she said, her voice slightly coarsened by alcohol.

"Thank you, Miss Norma. We just try to give our guests what they want. That way it can be a profitable deal for everybody and we all stay friends," replied Bob as he saw a way to get rid of this strange woman before she caused any trouble. "May I buy your next drink with the compliments of the management, before you leave?"

"Very smoothly done, Roberto, but you can't get rid of me that easily. What I'm getting at is that I wouldn't want any of my friends, men or women, to know about my little excursion to your motel. I can trust you to be discreet, can't I?"

"But, of course, Miss Norma. That goes without saying. I can even forget that you were here at all, if you would prefer it that way."

Norma looked fixedly at him for a moment and then said, "That might be the best way, since I should have met someone several hours ago."

She turned half away from him and murmured to herself, "Poor Susie. I wonder if she's still waiting for me. She must be very tired of waiting. In her condition."

"I beg your pardon?" asked Bob politely, anxious not to offend this odd girl. "Were you speaking to me, Miss?"

"Not exactly. I just said that a friend of mine, a girl who has tastes like mine, is probably very angry at me for keeping her waiting like this." Norma flashed a quick cruel smile and amended her statement. "She's inflamed and irritated, as well as angry, but you wouldn't know what I'm talking about."

"Yes. Of course," said Bob, smiling graciously even though he suspected what she meant. "Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go — —."

Norma grabbed his arm firmly as he started to walk away. "Don't go rushing off as if I had leprosy. What's

wrong with me isn't catching. And you may not want to believe it, but there are a hell of a lot of people like me. I know."

"Indeed?" replied Bob civilly. The last thing in the world he wanted right now was to get involved in an argument about sexual variations with a drunk Lesbian. He had work to get done, and arguing with her would probably result in her raising an uproar as she boastfully tried to prove her convictions. If he could only get her out of the place somehow. Or at least away from the bar.

"You're damn right there are," Norma continued belligerently. "Why, I'll bet there are plenty of girls in here every week that go for the kind of kicks I like. Most of them just don't have the nerve to be honest and frank about it. They're just scared to admit it. That's all. Now take that Susie Perkins that was in here that night when we were with Brad Morrison. You'd never think she was the type, would you? That shows how much you know, Mr. Wise Guy."

Norma's voice was getting louder and louder as she alcoholically expounded her desires and beliefs. Bob had to get her stopped somehow before she alarmed or annoyed the other customers. As the manager glanced around for some means of maintaining peace and quiet, he got still another shock. Carol Brandon had come in and was gaily signalling to him from nearby. Had she heard Norma's confession and accusations?

"Excuse me a moment, Miss Norma," he said quietly. "Another guest needs me. What you are saying is most interesting, and I'll be right back."

Bob walked toward Carol, his professionally dazzling smile turned on as usual. "Yes, Miss Brandon. What can I do for you this afternoon?"

"Nothing right now, Bob," replied Carol lightly. "I'm early for meeting my friends, and you looked as though you wanted an excuse to escape from that woman at the bar. Oh, and by the way, we'll want to use one of

your motel units later, so you might as well give me the key now, so I won't have to bother you later when you're busy." Carol looked intently at the handsome manager, as though daring him to question her right to demand every favor.

"Of course, Miss Brandon," said Bob, remembering her father's instructions to act as if everything was as usual. "Come with me to the office and I'll get you a key."

As they walked toward the office Carol asked casually, "Who was the woman who had you button-holed?"

"A lady who has been here before, and was explaining her ideas rather forcibly."

"About men and sex, I'll bet," laughed Carol.

"Well, you're half right," replied Bob smiling.

Carol was silent for a minute, figuring out his cryptic remark. Then her face lit up as she found the answer. "You mean she's a butch-dyke in search of a doll? Sounds fascinating."

Silently Bob handed her a key and Carol continued, "How about letting me listen to your Lesbian lady for a while. I've often wondered what they were like. Maybe I'll be able to learn something."

Bob started to protest and warn Carol away from Norma's alcoholic aggressiveness and domination, but then decided against it. He didn't want to antagonize Carol, and she certainly ought to be able to handle the other girl, no matter what happened. Now he had to get going to make sure that the club was ready for the evening rush of business.

Carol walked over and sat down on a bar-stool next to Norma. The Phys Ed teacher glanced up at the new arrival and their eyes locked for a moment as they studied each other.

"Are you man enough to let me buy you a drink?" asked Carol abruptly without lowering her gaze.

"I'm man enough for that and a lot more," replied

Norma with even intensity, her eyes now taking in every lush detail of Carol's face and body. The full high breasts, the slim waist, and the firmly rounded hips of the newcomer entranced Norma. Here was an exquisitely formed young girl who was no shrinking violet or paid performer. Maybe the trip to Silver Palm was going to be a success after all.

When their drinks arrived, Carol raised hers and said, "E Pluribus Unum".

"I've seen that on dimes. What do *you* think it means?" asked Norma boldly.

"It's my personal motto and I translate it as. 'I'll try anything once.' Are you with me?" said Carol unabashedly, daring Norma to call her bluff.

"I'm way ahead of you, if you mean it," said Norma, throwing all her usual caution to the winds in her alcoholic eagerness to find a new and different partner.

"Try me and see," offered Carol.

"I have a key to one of the cabins outside," said Norma slowly but with passionate intensity. "If you want to come out there with me now, I'll bet I can show you tricks and kicks you never tried before."

"I'll bet you can, too," replied Carol, getting up from her bar-stool. "But you'll find I'm eager and willing to learn E Pluribus Unum. Let's go."

When the two girls were locked in the privacy of Norma's motel room, they studied each other carefully for a few moments. Then without further preamble Carol began to undress quickly, tossing her clothes onto a nearby chair. Presently she stood before the pleased and surprised Norma, naked except for a lacy garter-belt which tautly supported her dark nylons, and her high-heeled black pumps.

With her feet slightly spread and her hands on her firm flaring hips so that her large breasts were thrust out boldly toward her friend, Carol tossed her head like a mettlesome mare and brazenly said, "Now you see

what you have to work with. Show me what you can do with it. I'm always looking for new kicks, but I've never tried anything like this before."

Slowly Norma walked over and stood close in front of her eager pupil.

"It will be fun teaching you, darling," murmured Norma. "Now go over and lie down till I get ready too."

Carol willingly obeyed and presently the slim streamlined form of the older girl was hovering over her on the bed. Norma crouched above and beside her new-found play-mate and delicately kissed her on the mouth. Carol quickly responded.

"I know you like what I'm doing, darling," whispered Norma in her partner's ear as the exotic rites stroking continued. "You can do the same things for me if you want to. It will feel wonderful to me when you do, and then I can show you even more things we can enjoy together."

Slowly and experimentally Carol followed this suggestion and began to give as well as receive. Their passions accelerated toward Nirvana and they let themselves go with pagan abandon in sensual fulfillment. Soon they soared into mutual ecstasy, with moans and sighs of physical release as proof of thrilling climax.

They clung together as their passions waned and then slowly relaxed into sated sleepiness. At last Norma asked softly: "How did you like it, dear? Was it as good as you hoped?"

"Not bad. Not bad at all," admitted Carol with reluctant admiration. "I've tried a whole lot of things for kicks, and this wasn't the worst by any means. Not the best, either, but very nice for a change of pace."

"Could we do it again some time? Soon?" asked Norma, anxious to cement this bizarre friendship now that it had been established so effectively. "We could have even better kicks, I'm sure."

"Sure. Why not?" said Carol carelessly. "But there's

one important thing missing from a deal like we've just had. Something that's very important to me."

"I understand, dear. But I can make it up to you in other ways. I'll prove it next time," Norma assured her newly initiated partner. "When can I see you again? Here or anywhere you say."

"I'm out here several times a week. Usually later in the evening. Look me up here and maybe we can figure out a real blast. I have some friends who would get a large charge out of a party like this. They could watch while we put on a show for them. Then maybe you'd like to watch while I demonstrated the real thing with one of the fellows?"

"Are you sure I'd be safe from them?" asked Norma worriedly. To watch such a performance might be very interesting if she could just watch and hate without having to fear.

"Don't you worry. I can handle them. I've never yet met a man I couldn't handle, one way or another. And the boys could learn a lot from you," Carol assured her new companion confidently.

Then Carol jumped up from the bed and began dressing. "You stay here if you want to. But I've got to rush. My friends will be wondering what happened to me. And I may tell them. For laughs. Well, I'm off. Look me up again here next week. OKay?"

As the door closed behind Carol, Norma still lolled in satiated contentment on the bed. Between her physical exhaustion and the liquor, she felt delightfully sleepy. It was much too late to meet Susie, so Norma curled up for a little snooze before going home.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Brad Morrison was literally sick with worry. Not that worrying did any good, but he couldn't take any action to solve his terrible problems until he could figure out some plan that wouldn't make things even worse than

ey were right now.

It was bad enough when his impetuous and unrestrained love-making had so hurt and antagonized little Susie that she was lost to him forever and treated him like the pariah he was. But now, on top of everything else, he looked like he was about to be saddled with a wife he didn't love or even like. Carol was notoriously and brazenly promiscuous, the daughter of a known gangster and political boss of the worst type, and intended to use her marriage to him only as a disguise for her continuing wildly immoral parties, to which he could not object. Brad could not complain or explain to Big Bill Brandon, her father. It would only enrage the violent and powerful older man and insure Brad's prompt death at the hands of vengeful hired hoodlums.

And despite Big Bill's promises of rapid advancement and preference as Carol's husband, Brad knew that no amount of seeming success in his chosen profession could make up for a loveless and immoral farce of a marriage. Money and business achievement were fine, but they could not make up for complete loss of personal honor and self-respect. Carol would not limit herself to one or two discreet affairs. Her many and continuous infidelities would make Brad the laughing stock of the whole countryside. It sounded very melodramatic, but Brad's dilemma had only two horns. Death or dishonor.

Brad needed help but where could he get it? Suddenly he thought of Bob Ponci. They had grown up together, and Bob had shown his lasting friendship by warning him of Big Bill Brandon's possible threats on account of Carol's misbehaviour. And while Brad had no definite knowledge of Big Bill's connections with the Silver Palm and its girl-serviced motel, he was sure that Bob Ponci would have more useful information on how to handle the situation than he, Brad, did. Brad would drive out to the night club and have a talk with the ~~infamous~~ handsome manager.

"Hello, Brad. You're becoming quite a steady customer out here," Bob greeted his old friend as Brad entered the night club. "Are you alone tonight?"

"Yes, I am, Bob. And I'm not here to have fun. Can I tell you about a big problem I have, and get some advice from you when you have some time free?"

"Sure thing, Brad. I'm glad to help you out if I can," replied the manager. "Go into the office over there and wait a few minutes for me. I'll be with you as soon as I can, and we can talk in privacy."

Brad paced the floor of the well-furnished office and presently was joined by Bob. The whole problem was so complicated, involving so many people, that Brad hardly knew where to begin his explanation.

"Wait a second, Brad," the manager interrupted amiably. "Take one thing at a time. Am I right in guessing that part of your trouble is about that little blonde girl, Susie Perkins, that you had out here a couple of times?"

"Yes. She's mixed up in it. How did you know?"

"Because you gave her an engagement ring the first time you brought her here. The next time, she wasn't wearing the ring and acted very cold toward you. She was huddling under the protective and possessive wing of that bull-dyke who was with your party. And I've heard more about those two since then."

"What are you talking about, Bob? I haven't told you about why Susie is furious and disappointed at me." Brad protested.

"You don't have to spell it out for me. I'll admit you've got troubles, fellow. Losing out to another guy is bad enough, when the girl is as cute as that Susie is. But to lose her to another female is worse. But what can I do about it to help you?"

Brad stared in open-mouthed consternation at his friend, trying to assimilate this information. "You mean you think that Susie and that Norma person are — — — well, — — lovers?"

"I don't have to think, Brad. I guessed it the first time I saw them. And that butch, Norma, has boasted to me about her conquest of the little blonde."

"Ooooh. This is awful. Even worse than I thought," said Brad in desperation. "I thought it was all because I was too rough, much too violent, with Susie right after I gave her the ring."

"I don't know anything about that, Brad. But I do know that a normal girl will forgive almost anything a man does to her if she is sure he loves her and wants to marry her."

Brad was lost in the chaos of his thoughts for a moment, and then he continued. "But Susie is only part of my troubles. Remember you warned me that Big Bill Brandon might be after me on account of Carol?"

"Yes. I was afraid you might be in over your head when you started seeing that girl. She goes with a wild crowd."

"Now I know. But Carol has been feeding her father some garbage about being in love with me. So Big Bill had me up to his office for a talk. He wants me to marry Carol almost immediately, and he has it all figured out to make me a big-shot around here for Carol's benefit."

"He can do it, Brad. He can be a very influential friend if he wants to," said Bob seriously.

"I'd rather be successful on my own merits. Especially after what I've found out about Carol's ideas of how a marriage should be worked. The only girl I want to marry is Susie Perkins."

"Right now your only competition is this dyke, Norma. If you can get Susie out of her clutches, you ought to be able to convince her that old-fashioned passion between a man and woman is better than any all-girl deal that Norma can offer. I happen to know that Norma is cheating on her already."

"But where is Susie? How can I rescue her?"

"Do you know where Norma lives?"

"Somewhere at the College, I guess. Why?"

"From something Norma said, I'll bet that your cute little blonde is there now, pining away for her loving girl-friend. If you want her, go get her."

"I will. Right now. But that doesn't get me out of the mess with Carol and her father."

"Settle one thing at a time, Brad," Bob advised him. "When you get back, maybe I can help you out some more with Big Bill Brandon."

As Brad Morrison maneuvered his car out of the parking lot he vaguely saw a human figure come out of one of the motel rooms and begin to walk along the line of units toward the night club. Just as he was ready to swing out onto the main road for his trip to State College to find and rescue Susie, he noted that the unidentified figure had stopped at the door of another motel room and was about to enter. Then Brad sped off in search of the girl he wanted to marry.

Although Brad did not know it, the figure he had unconsciously noted was Carol. She was just leaving the room where she had experienced her exotic initiation into Lesbian thrills, and was on her way to the bar of the night club where she was to meet her wild, swinging friends and plan what form their brawling orgy should take for tonight. Carol was sure she had things all squared away with her father, by claiming she would be with Brad Morrison. Her father seemed to like Brad and there was no way that either man could check up on her. Even if she did get caught in her lies, Carol had supreme confidence in her ability to avoid any serious punishment. She could blame everything on Brad and her father would believe her.

The fact that she had already indulged in a passionate and rewarding sex-session with Norma did not dampen Carol's anticipation and enthusiasm for the wild party still to come this evening. In fact, her experiences with Norma, satisfying as they had been, had only whetted

Carol's appetite and increased her expectation for more kicks to come. She was really insatiable and always on the lookout for more and more novel thrills. Carol was so engrossed with thoughts of physical sensuality, both past and future, that at first she hardly noticed the sobbing moans coming from one doorway she passed.

When these sounds of pain and misery broke through into her consciousness, Carol stopped and went back to listen at the closed door. There could now be no doubt about it. The person within was suffering terribly. And the voice sounded almost like a man's.

Carol was by nature a self-confident and aggressive person with a tendency to poke her nose into places where it did not belong. And she felt a sort of proprietary interest in anything connected with the Silver Palm, since she was sure that her father had a controlling interest in the place. For these reasons Carol did not hesitate to open the door and step inside.

The bitter sobs were coming from a young man who lay on the large bed, his face buried in the pillow, and completely naked with the exception of a dark sock on one foot. A glance into the bath showed that he was alone in his misery. Standing with her back to the closed door by which she had entered, Carol asked, "Hey. What's your trouble?"

The young man froze for an instant at hearing the unexpected question and then rolled over and sat up to stare at her. He was so distraught that he made no effort to cover his nakedness from her gaze.

"Who are you?" he demanded in fright and anger. "Leave me alone."

"I heard you as I was passing. I just came in to see if I could help," said Carol honestly.

She studied his exposed body as impersonally as she could. Not bad, she decided. A naked man had only one possible meaning to Carol, for in the past several years she had rarely thought of anything except that a girl

now because you couldn't perform like Tarzan and do a job for her?"

Charlie stared at this amazingly forthright girl. His misery and hate were being replaced by surprise and awe. He nodded slightly to indicate that she was on the right track.

"Then I still say she's a bitch. And a fool, too," announced Carol definitely. Her sex-oriented thoughts kept analysing the situation in her perpetual search for novel and rewarding thrills. Suddenly she came to a conclusion and acted on her decision.

"Stand up, Tarzan!" she commanded.

In a daze of whirling hopes and fears Charlie slowly obeyed and stood facing her in his nakedness.

"Go over and lock the door, Tarzan," ordered Carol sternly. "We don't want anyone else barging in on us for a while."

Charlie shuffled across the room to obey, although he had no idea why he should. When he turned to face her again he was increasingly conscious of her lush femininity, but he was no longer frightened of it. In a way it seemed to justify the fact that he was obeying her. He didn't have to worry about his lack of virile aggressive manhood. If he was a slave of this exotic and dominating girl, all he had to do was obey her and everything would be all right. He didn't have to prove himself. She would take care of everything for both of them.

"Take off that sock you're wearing," ordered Carol as she continued to survey him arrogantly. As Charlie half-knelt to obey, he felt that he was in a sense bowing to her awesome female appearance and power. Wearing only one sock he had looked like a fool. And this wonderful girl didn't want her loving slave to look like a fool. In serving her Charlie would be able to regain his self-respect and his manhood.

"Come over here, Tarzan," ordered Carol, and when Charlie stood humbly before her she said, "Now undress

me. And do it right. Show me how wonderful and exciting and perfect I am. It will take a real man to please me."

She seemed so sure of herself that Charlie never questioned her right to command him. This was so different from his feeble fumbling efforts at intimacy a little while ago. With her to give orders, everything would come out all right.

He could never remember all the details of the next half hour, but some vignettes were indelibly etched into him mind and soul. Holding and kissing and kneading her huge firm breasts on command after he had removed her dress and brassiere. Kneeling in humble adoration before her while removing her shoes and nylons and garter-belt. Standing servilely behind her while he struggled to get her dainty snug panties down over her full feminine hips. He was obeying commands and had no emotional responsibility himself, so his own body could respond as Nature intended and as this goddess demanded.

Then he was lying on the bed with her beside him, caressing and stimulating her as she directed. From the Olympian heights of her domination she appreciated his services and complimented him on the firmness of his reaction to her divine beauty and closeness. Under her seemingly omnipotent power there could be no question of his maleness, so he did not fail himself in any way. His excitement held more of awe and worship than of human love, but there could be no doubt as to his excitement, as they both were well aware.

Now he was lying subserviently on the bed while his divinely thrilling goddess crouched in domination over him. He felt an almost spiritual uplifting thrill as their flesh merged in the ultimate act of sensual worship of her beauty. He gloried in being permitted to express his adoration in this exquisite way, and he devoted all his energies toward being worthy and pleasing her. She had said that it would take a real man to satisfy her, and he

was determined to qualify, under her all-powerful direction.

As Carol finally soared into clenching moaning ecstasy, Charlie felt his own worshipping passions erupt in final proof of his devotion. He had amply demonstrated to her, and to himself, that he might be a humble slave, but we was a *man*.

When sanity eventually returned to this oddly matched pair, each knew deep in his soul that they had found something that must not be lost. No longer would Carol have to keep searching for a love she could accept. Her former excesses had been in the nature of a contest in which she had to prove time and again that she was better than any man, and so deserved his respect. By demonstrating that she could out-do every man at his own game of physical virtuosity and promiscuity, she had sought to prove to herself that she was better than they were. Now she had a man, fully equipped to give her superb satisfaction in every way, who wanted and needed and worshipped her superiority. There was no necessity to prove her worthiness any more. He willingly and eagerly accepted her and worshipped her. What more could she possibly desire?

For Charlie, the lack of responsibility had been the important factor. He need not doubt himself or his abilities, if his perfectly feminine goddess knew he could succeed and commanded him to do so. She needed a man, so he automatically became one. Anything she wanted, he could perform. Separately they might be at war with the world, but together they made an unbeatable team for every aspect of living, including this important item of giving and receiving sensual rewards.

They lay in silence on the bed, digesting and slowly accepting what they had discovered. Much later Carol said, "Show me how much you love me by making love to me again." Charlie knew that he would be able to obey fully and wonderfully any command might

give him. After all, he was a man.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

It was quite late in the evening before Big Bill Brandon was finished with his last conference and interview for the day. It had been a busy day, as usual, but his type of success could only be achieved by long hours and shrewd thinking. You had to keep thinking one jump ahead of your competition and your employees if you wanted to stay on top of the heap.

He glanced at his watch and decided that he still had time to check up on a couple more things. If he drove out to Silver Palm right now, without telling anyone he was coming, he would find out how things were going under the evidently capable management of Bob Ponci, and he would also be able to see how his daughter, Carol, was making out with Brad Morrison. She told him that she would be out at the club with her fiance, and Big Bill could also check up on Bob's report that Carol was occasionally a trouble maker and associating with dubious company. And as a final inducement for the trip, Big Bill would like a couple of drinks for a night-cap before he went to bed.

Big Bill walked into the bar and had ordered his drink before he saw anybody he knew. He was sure he had not been identified by anyone, which gave him a good chance to see the place in operation. The customers at the bar were being served promptly and well and seemed to be enjoying themselves. There were a number of good-looking girls in evidence, and Big Bill wondered idly which of them were legitimate dates of the men they were with and which of them were the girls who worked the motel as call-girls.

Over by the office, Bob Ponci was talking seriously with a girl who seemed very young and attractive and Big Bill studied her closely. She seemed almost childishly naive in dress and general appearance, but the bold

bulges of her breasts beneath her sweater, her lithely slim waist, and the firm swelling of her short skirt over her hips made her superbly exciting to the older man, even at this distance. She must be one of the hired motel-girls, since she was talking so earnestly with Bob.

"I'm sorry you don't feel well, Dottie," Bob was saying to Cissie Reynolds in real sympathy. "Are you coming down with a virus or something?"

"I don't know, really. I feel all funny in my stomach, but not like a stomach-ache," she answered. "It started a little while ago and it's getting worse. I think I'd better be going home before I feel any worse. I couldn't handle any more customers tonight, the way I'm feeling."

"Are you sure you're up to driving back to College alone? I don't want you to take any unnecessary chances, you know."

"Because sick employes are bad for business?" she asked, looking up into his worried face.

"You know better than that, Dottie. Here at the club our association has to be business-like. But I think I've proved that I like you personally, too." Bob assured her tenderly. "Haven't I tried to make things easy for you in every way in the few days that you've been working here?"

"I was only kidding, Bob. I really appreciate the ways you've helped me. It hasn't been nearly as bad as I feared it would be. I've certainly learned a lot, including the fact that I can trust you."

"Could you like and trust me enough to have a date with me sometime?" Bob asked. Then, as he saw fear flash across her face, he went on, "I mean just a date. We'll both forget all about the Silver Palm and why you are working here. Would you like that?"

Cissie continued to look up at him, studying his face and trying to make up her mind. He was very handsome, worldly, and masculine. And he had certainly demonstrated that he liked her, even though the conditions of their

meeting and working together could have allowed him to behave quite differently toward her. But now, feeling as awful as she did and getting worse all the time, was hardly the occasion to make any decisions on such a subject.

"Let me think about it a little, Roberto," she said quietly. "Maybe it would be fun. Ask me again, soon."

Bob reached out and tenderly took her hand. "I'll do that, Dottie," he said as he squeezed her hand lightly and held her eyes with his. "And on our date I'm going to call you 'Cissie'. Then you can be your real self, not 'Dottie', the girl who works here."

"That sounds like the way I'd like it," said Cissie. "But for now I'd better get going."

"Would you like me to drive you home? I can get away from here for a little while if you want" offered the manager. He gave a quick glance around the room to make sure that things were still running smoothly, and saw a familiar but unexpected figure approaching. Big Bill Brandon.

"Hello, Bob," greeted the politician, his gaze more concerned with appreciating Cissie's youthful beauty.

"Good evening, Mr. Brandon. It's a pleasant surprise to see you here tonight."

"Just thought I'd drop in and see how things were going and say Hello to my daughter and Brad Morrison. They are meant to be here."

"I saw them earlier but they don't seem to be around right now," replied Bob evasively.

"Then at least you can introduce me to this delightful young lady. Is she an employe here?"

"Yes, she is," said Bob, not realizing where his admission might lead. "This is Dottie. Meet Mr. Brandon who is a well known man around this area."

"Good evening, Mr. Brandon," said Cissie, smiling. "I've heard of you."

"Then to make us even, come back to the bar and have

older man.

"Thanks, but I don't feel well," said Cissie seriously. "I was just going home."

"A drink won't take long and will make you feel better," said Big Bill with authority as he grasped her elbow and led her toward the bar.

Cissie shot a pleading glance at the manager but he could only shrug his shoulders helplessly. When Big Bill Brandon wanted something, he always got it. As Big Bill and Cissie settled onto the stools, Bob gave her a reassuring pat on the shoulder and excused himself. Cissie knew that he would try to get her out of here as soon as he could.

"You are a very lovely girl, Dottie," said Big Bill, inclining his stool over so that his shoulder and thigh were touching hers. "What kind of work do you do here at the Silver Palm?"

"Well, — — er — — you see, — — I've only been here a few days," replied Cissie in confusion. The pains in her lower abdomen were so violent that she could hardly talk, and this was a most awkward question.

"Don't worry, Dottie," chuckled Big Bill, sipping his drink. "I won't embarrass you any more. I know about the special arrangements they have here, and I just wanted to make sure that you were one of the girls. You're so young and pretty, I'll bet you are one of the college girls. Is that right?"

"Yes, it is, Mr. Brandon. But how do you know so much about it?"

"Oh, I know Bob pretty well. And I know the College too. My daughter goes there. Carol Brandon."

"Oh, yes. I've heard of her," said Cissie vaguely. The pains in her lower body were becoming increasingly severe and it was hard for her to talk. True she had heard of Carol Brandon, but the fact that she was being wild was widespread, with

it or not. And if he was anything like his daughter, Cissie wanted to get away from him as soon as she could. She was feeling much too sick to even consider taking on another customer tonight. But did she dare just walk off and leave him? If she didn't, Cissie was afraid she'd faint or something right here at the bar, and that would be awful. Attracting public attention like that might lead to the revelation of why she was here so often, and that would ruin everything, including her whole future.

By the time Brad Morrison got out to State College in his search for little Susie Perkins, it was so late that he could make no formal inquiries as to where Norm Allen, the Phys Ed instructor lived. However, he did find a man airing his dog on a street bordering the campus, and got the information that a number of female faculty members had apartments in buildings nearby.

Brad parked his car and began to hunt, hoping that Susie was still waiting at Norma's place. In the lobby of the first building he entered, Norma's name was not listed, so he left to try the next. There were many cars parked for the night along the curb, and suddenly Brad stopped, staring. There was Susie's car, and in the front seat sat a tiny huddled figure.

By now Susie was just recovering from hysterics. She had been waiting forever, it seemed, even though he had claimed it was only about eight hours. Since three o'clock this afternoon, she had just been sitting there expecting Norma momentarily, and now it was about midnight. Her body was being continually scorched and inflamed by the unquenched fires left over from her preliminary excitement in the wood-shaded pool with Norma several days before. And after the first hour or so of waiting, Susie's soul was being seared by the realization that Norma was intentionally avoiding her. It never occurred to Susie that Norma might have met with an accident or been unavoidably detained. Norma could

handle any situation, and would have been here on time to meet her lovely little doll, — if she had wanted to. Susie could not sit still, and all her squirmings and twistings only reminded her more of how much she needed Norma and her wonderful physical love. It was as much jealousy as disappointment that was bothering Susie.

Susie dared not leave the car for fear of missing Norma when she arrived. By eight o'clock, the little blonde was being tortured by hunger as well as the other physical and mental torments which harrassed her. Then came bitter scalding tears of sorrow and frustration, and soon Susie was emotionally exhausted by the strength of her own reactions. But still her sensual arousal continued to annoy and tantalize her, and anger and hate against the girl who was causing all this blended into her confused feelings. Why had Norma showed her all the beauty and pleasure which could be derived from her body, and then left her unsatisfied like this? Only a cruel and hateful person would do such a thing. Maybe her Mother was right, after all. Maybe anything to do with sex was basically evil and could only cause suffering and punishment for those who indulged in it. She had been hurt terribly during her one experience with Brad Morrison, and now she was being made to suffer from trying to enjoy forbidden pleasures with Norma.

For the last hour or so, Susie had just been sitting woodenly in her car. She would wait for Norma if it took a week. She must face her tormentor and bluntly accuse her of leading her into sinful ways. Only then could Susie again retire into the placid, unfeeling emotional vacuum which Mother prescribed as the only proper and safe way for a girl to exist. Maybe the insistent yearnings in her body, which were now nearly driving her mad, would eventually subside and leave her in anaesthetic peace, free of all desires.

It was at about this stage of Susie's emotional upheaval

that she became conscious of a large figure standing motionless beside her car. After the first instant of surprise, she recognized Brad, and her reaction was a mixture of relief that it was someone she knew, and increased alarm that it was someone who represented a very real menace to her.

"Hello, Susie. Don't be frightened of me. I've come to take you home."

"No. Go away. I don't want to go home. I don't want to go anywhere with you. Go away."

"Don't act like that, Susie," said Brad reassuringly as he approached the car. "I'm not going to hurt you. I love you. And I just want to help you."

"Yes, I know. You showed me once," replied the girl bitterly.

"I've tried to apologize to you for what happened that time. But now I just want to get you out of this awful mess you're in."

"I'm all right. Just leave me alone. I'm not in any mess."

"You are, whether you want to admit it or not. Waiting for Norma like this can only get you even deeper into trouble. Especially when she's not coming back here to meet you tonight," said Brad slowly.

"Yes, she is," replied Susie desperately. "She has to come back to me. She loves me. She told me so, and it must be true. She has to come back. I'll go crazy if I have to stay feeling like this any longer."

"If you won't let me take you home, Susie, at least let me take you to Norma right now. You can't spend the whole night sitting in a car on the street like this. The police will be asking you embarrassing questions if you try it," said Brad reasonably.

"You know where Norma is now?" asked Susie in alarm and surprise. Then she became wary again. "You can't know anything about Norma. She wouldn't have anything to do with you. You're a man ! ! You're just

trying to get at me again. Just like last time."

Brad sighed in resignation and tried to control the anger that was boiling in his heart. Whether Susie wanted it or not, he was determined that she should escape from the foul plot that was building up around her. Maybe he would never be able to marry her, but at least he could spare her from public humiliation and from the mess she had gotten into. Norma's wild and perverted behaviour was becoming known to too many people. When the explosion and exposure came, Susie was not going to be ruined by association, if he could prevent it.

"Now listen carefully, Susie. I'm not going to let you stay here like this. I'll take you home or I'll take you to where Norma is now, but you're going with me. Shall we use your car or mine?"

"Get away from me ! ! If you try to touch me or anything, I'll scream for help."

"You don't dare, Susie, You're coming with me now. If you want to scream, I'll have a lot to tell the police when they arrive. About you and Norma and the Silver Palm and Big Bill Brandon, and his daughter, Carol."

When Susie still refused, Brad reached into the car, opened the door, and with his great masculine strength and determination, he easily lifted the tiny blonde out. She tried to struggle in his arms but it did no good and she was afraid to call out. It might enrage Brad into killing her, — and she didn't want a lot of strangers listening to what he might say about her and her relations with Norma. Almost as easily as if she had been a baby, she felt herself carried in Brad's powerful arms along the quiet street. He kept talking quietly to her, and by the time they reached his car a block away, Susie felt a little calmer. To her intense surprise, she knew that being held close in his tender and proprietary embrace was making her feel less deserted and lonely and frantically bewildered.

He opened the door of his car and gently put her down

on the seat. Then he went around and got in behind the wheel. As he started up Brad asked, "Do you want to go home? Or shall I take you to the Silver Palm?"

"I don't know. I guess I don't really care," wailed Susie, huddling into her corner, as far from Brad's menace as possible. Then in a steadier voice she asked, "Are you sure Norma's there?"

"She was. But I don't think she would want to see you. I gathered that she was quite busy with someone else."

"I can hardly believe it," murmured Susie. "That she'd leave me and go off, knowing how much I need her now." Then Susie realized how much she was admitting to Brad of her relationship with Norma. But he seemed to know about it already. And he was not horrified or disgusted with her for it. In fact, he had even repeated that he still loved her.

They drove along in silence for a while, but each of them was contemplating his own side of their diverse and shared problems. Before they reached the Silver Palm nightclub, Susie somehow found herself over on Brad's side of the front seat, snuggling for protection against his broad shoulder. She remembered vividly the awful things that had happened between them that terrible night months ago, but now those painful and humiliating intimacies didn't seem so bad. No matter what her Mother kept advising, Susie knew that she needed the acceptance and ecstasy that two people could give each other by being physically and emotionally close in every way. Norma had taught her the joys that her body could bring. But Norma had also taught her that unnatural passions could not be trusted and could not be more than passing fancies. What could the future hold for two girls if they always had to hide their love from the rest of the world?

As the car swung into the parking lot at the Silver Palm, Susie looked up at Brad and asked, "Can you ever forgive me for what I've done?"

"Of course, Susie. Remember, I made a terrible mistake, too. I just hope that we can start out fresh after all this is over. I still love you with all my heart, and I still have the ring, for whenever you want to take it again."

With a shy wry smile, Susie said, "Two such complete fools as we are, ought to make a perfect pair."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

As the time dragged on through the evening with no message from her daughter, Mother Perkins became more and more alarmed. Susie had said that she would be staying at College to see her friend, Norma, after classes, but it was now hours after dinner-time and Susie had neither appeared nor phoned as to her whereabouts.

Calling Norma's apartment at the College had produced no answer, and Mrs. Perkins didn't dare call the police for help yet. If everything was all right, she would look like a foolish old woman. And if anything was wrong, the police would notify her as soon as they knew anything. There was only one other place that Mother Perkins thought of, the Silver Palm. She had heard it mentioned several times, and maybe Susie and Norma had gone there and forgotten to phone.

Mrs. Perkins looked up the number in the phone directory and called. She would ask for Norma, for certainly nobody there would know Susie by name.

"Good evening. The Silver Palm."

"Hello. I mean 'Good Evening'." said Mother Perkins, somewhat flustered. "Do you know a teacher from the College? A Norma Allen?"

"Yes, I think I know Miss Allen," replied Bob Ponci smoothly.

"Well, is she there this evening?" asked Mother Perkins worriedly.

"I think Miss Allen was here earlier. I'm not sure if she's still here," said Bob evasively. If this was another Lesbian pal of Norma's, he wanted to avoid trouble. Let these

two female homos start fighting, and he might have a real brawl on his hands. That would bring the cops and a lot of unwanted publicity of the wrong kind. "May I take a mesage for Miss Allen, if she's still here?"

"Maybe that won't be necessary. Can you tell me if there was another girl with her? It's the other girl I'm really looking for."

Bob's mind flashed from Norma to Dottie to Carol Brandon, and he smiled as he replied, "Yes. I can definitely say that Miss Allen is with another girl."

"Thank you. That's all I need to know," said Mother Perkins and hung up. Susie was safe, but there was something wrong somewhere. That man on the phone hadn't sounded trustworthy. Just like all men. You couldn't trust them as far as you could see them where there was a pretty girl involved. Especially in a wicked place like a nightclub.

It took another few minutes for Mother Perkins to worry herself into the stage where she had to do something, but then she phoned for a cab and had herself driven out to the Silver Palm, so she could see for herself what was happening to Susie.

Meanwhile Bob Ponci was getting more and more upset at the interest Big Bill Brandon was taking in Dottie. She had said she was feeling sick and wanted to go home while she still could manage it alone. But the most important consideration was that Bob could not bring himself to even imagine the lovely young girl as being subjected to Big Bill's sexual demands. So far Bob had been able to save her from being ravaged by any of the customers to whom she had sold herself, and only now that Big Bill definitely wanted her, did Bob admit to himself how much he had come to love her. He had to save her from any further danger, especially from Big Bill, right now, before it was too late.

The manager approached the politician and the youthful girl at the bar. "Could I speak to Dottie for a moment

on business, Mr. Brandon?" he asked.

"All right, Bob," replied the older man, his face flushed with alcohol and desire. He had forgotten about his original intention of seeing his daughter and her alleged fiancé. He was only concerned with having this cute young girl, and the sooner the better. As the owner of the Silver Palm he had some rights and privileges, and a passion-session with this exquisite dame was one he wanted to collect on soon. "But bring her back right away. We'll want to use one of the motel units for a while, won't we Dottie?"

"I'm afraid I can't tonight, Mr. Brandon," said Cissie in panic. "Before you got here I told Roberto that I felt sick and wanted to go home."

"To hell with that," said Big Bill in his softly menacing voice. "You can go home later, *after* you and I have had a little visit."

Cissie glanced at Bob in fright, begging him to help her out of this terrible situation. She was pale and sweating from the pain in her abdomen, and even the thought of being intimate with anyone was too much to consider. She might have been able to go through with serving him under ordinary circumstances, but now it was out of the question.

Bob understood the situation, but was caught in the middle between two violently conflicting interests, to both of which he owed allegiance. His whole business future hung on staying in good with Big Bill Brandon and his local political power. But only now did he realize how seriously his heart was involved with Cissie Reynolds. This dilemma could tear him apart, for either way he would lose.

"Here's a pass-key, Mr. Brandon," said Bob stalling for time before he made the fateful decision. "You go out and take one of the empty units. I'll have Dottie or some other lovely girl out to take care of you in just a few minutes."

Big Bill took the key, staring threateningly at his employee, and said, "All right, Bob. But it had better be this Dottie, and soon, if you know what's good for you. I wouldn't want to be crossed up."

While Big Bill left the bar and headed out to the motel part of the set-up, Bob led Cissie toward the office. She was so pale and weak that he wondered if she could make it even with his hand steadying her arm to keep her from staggering. Once inside, he helped Cissie lie down on a couch.

"Stay here just a minute, darling," he told her gently. "I saw Dr. Waring come in a little while ago. I'll get him to come in and take care of you."

"Thanks, Roberto," murmured Cissie through tears and clenched teeth. "I'm sorry to have made such a mess of things tonight, but I can't stand this pain much longer."

Almost immediately Bob was back, accompanied by Dr. Waring. After a preliminary moment, the doctor asked Bob to leave, for he would have to examine the patient more thoroughly to confirm his suspicions.

As Bob left the office, the head waiter came up and told him that there was a middle-aged woman, alone, demanding to see a Miss Norma Allen. Bob's mind flashed back to the phone call half an hour previous; and to Norma's probable whereabouts in her motel suite with Carol Brandon. He walked to the foyer and began talking courteously with Mother Perkins, trying to discover what she wanted and to avoid trouble.

Meanwhile Norma had hazily awakened from the nap which her sensual satiation and her many drinks had made necessary. Her dismal failure to get any pleasure from the hired call-girl was more than compensated for by the superb ecstasy and satisfaction which she and Carol had experienced together. Norma hoped that for the future Carol's wild Hedonistic abandon would be much more fun than Susie's shy and modest acceptance of Lesbian activities. And there had also been the promise

that Norma could watch while Carol indulged herself with a man, without herself being menaced by any masculine demands.

Norma rose and stretched luxuriantly before she slowly started to dress. She'd have another drink at the bar, and see if she could find Carol, to make a definite date for some evening in the near future. As Norma left her suite and started the short distance to the night club, she heard voices approaching from that direction, and saw a lone male figure walking toward her. Hastily Norma retreated to her own room, for she certainly did not want to get mixed up with any men at a time like this.

The single male figure that Norma had seen was Big Bill Brandon. Armed with Bob's pass-key, he was walking along the line of units, hunting for one that was not occupied, where he could wait for the arrival of that cute girl he had ordered. All the cabins nearest the club were obviously occupied, and then Big Bill heard boisterous male voices approaching, the same one that Norma had heard. Big Bill did not want to be identified by anyone, so he stepped into a dark narrow alley to wait till the noisy group of young men had passed. And while there he could not help overhearing what the approaching young fellows were saying.

"You must be kidding, Johnny. No dame will go for everything with everybody, the way you claim this Carol will," said one voice.

"No, I'm levelling with you, Dom. I've been in on deals like this with her a dozen times already. The sky's the limit as to what she'll do. And with any guy that wants it," replied the fellow called Johnny.

"What is she, — some beat-up old hag? And how much do you have to pay her?"

"Hell, no. She a real cute young chick, a college girl. And you don't have to pay her anything. Her old man has plenty of dough, and they say he's some kind of a big shot around here."

"You make it sound like a terrific deal, man. But where is she?"

"I told her I'd meet her here tonight with some pals of mine, for a real swinging party. She's not in the bar, so we'll find her in one of the cabins along here. You'll never forget tonight, once you've see this dame perform."

The group of expectant young fellows passed and Big Bill found himself quivering with shame and rage as he knew without a shadow of a doubt that they had been talking about his only daughter. So it was true! Carol was an even worse tramp than Bob Ponci had tried to hint and warn him. She was notorious for being eager to take on whole crowds of fellows and satisfy their every whim.

Violent anger welled up within Big Bill Brandon. He wanted revenge. First on Carol, for the shame she had brought onto herself and him. Later he could demand retribution from all the men who had availed themselves of the favors she so freely bestowed. But he had to act right now. Before he exploded from his seething rage.

With the pass-key in his hand, Big Bill opened the door of the nearest motel suite. All the lights were on and he found a slim, well-dressed, and somewhat startled young woman standing beside a rumpled bed when he burst in.

"Where's Carol?" he demanded brusquely.

"I — I don't know," replied Norma, wincing under his terrible wrath. "She was here with me a while ago, but I haven't seen her for an hour."

"Are you a pal of hers for these gang-bangs?" demanded Big Bill vaguely indicating the crowd of fellows who were now returning.

"With a man?" questioned Norma in disgust. "Of course not. What Carol and I enjoy together is much more beautiful than any man could give us."

Big Bill stared at Norma for a moment as the full meaning of her words sank in. Then despair mixed with

his towering rage as he said, "So she goes for girls, too?" Worse and worse. Well I'll put a stop to all this crazy playing around, if it's the last thing I ever do."

He stormed out of the room and Norma fearfully followed him. The suite next-door was unoccupied, although it had obviously been used not long before. The next unit in the line was quickly unlocked by the key in Big Bill's hand, but a chain on the door kept him from entering. He peered through the narrow slot and saw unmistakably the head and most of the nude body of his errant daughter.

"Carol? Carol, let me in right now," bellowed Big Bill. "I've caught you and Brad, and I've learned a lot more about the things you do."

He could see frantic movements on the bed, and then Carol was walking serenely toward him, still completely naked but unconcerned. "Hello, Dad. I wasn't expecting you, but come on in."

She unfastened the chain, and Big Bill thrust his way in, furtively followed by Norma. Mr. Brandon stopped in amazement when he saw that the man who had been so busily occupying the bed with Carol was not Brad Morrison, but a smaller, cowering man, a complete stranger.

"Who's that?" demanded Big Bill, pointing an accusing finger at the quaking Charlie.

"His name is Charlie," Carol told her father as she sat down on the bed and patted the scared and quaking young fellow's shoulder to reassure him. "We have just been making some really wonderful discoveries about each other."

"I'll bet," sneered her father. "The same things you did with every other man in the county, you bitch?"

"No, I don't mean those things, Dad," said Carol calmly. "And you might as well stop calling me names and getting yourself so righteously wrought up. After all, your connection with the Silver Palm, and your connection with a lot of other unsavory things around Indian

Falls, hardly permits you to do much in the way of name-calling and indignation. If I've been doing a lot of wrong things, I learned about them from you and your businesses."

Big Bill Brandon was stunned at this blunt counter-attack from his daughter. Finally he asked quietly, "Well, what about this Charlie?"

"I'm not sure yet," answered Carol. Then she turned to the frightened young man on the bed and asked: "Would you marry me, Charlie? I think we have a lot to offer each other. And I don't mean only in bed."

"Yes. Sure, Carol," said Charlie, so surprised he could hardly speak. "After all, you made me a man, so I want to be your man."

While all this had been happening within the room, the occupants had been so occupied with their own affairs that they had not noticed that a group had assembled outside the still open door and were looking in in wonder and amazement. The bunch of fellows who had been hunting for Carol were standing around with their eyes and mouths open, and from opposite directions came Bob Ponci, accompanied by Mother Perkins, and Brad Morrison, escorting Susie. The brightly lighted open door and the raised voices had attracted them, with Bob coming from the bar and Brad coming from the parking lot.

"There she is. That's Carol, the dame I was telling you guys about," exclaimed one of the predatory males in the group. "Let's all go in fellows. It looks like a real wild brawl is ready to start."

The young fellows crowded into the room in ardent anticipation, and Norma retreated in alarm to the far side of the room, leaving Big Bill in shocked silence to repel the invaders. Just then Bob Ponci and Mother Perkins arrived. Bob thrust his way in and demanded with authority, "What's going on here?"

When he saw Big Bill Brandon, Carol Brandon who

seemed undisturbed by the fact that she was still completely unclothed, the pansy Charlie also nude on the bed, and the Lesbian Norma, all in the room, with the excited young fellows crowding in around them, Bob could not figure out what was going on.

"There she is ! -" screamed Mother Perkins, pointing an accusing finger at Norma. "There's the woman who dragged my innocent little child out to this den of iniquity. Norma, what have you done with Susie?"

"Who in hell are you?" demanded Big Bill staring at the excited older woman. Then he turned to his daughter and bellowed, "And where in hell is that Brad Morrison you were meant to have a date with here tonight? Is he outside somewhere, selling tickets to this orgy?"

"No, Mr. Brandon. I'm right here," announced Brad as he came into the room with Susie.

Big Bill spun around to face this new arrival, and then Susie screamed, "Mother, what are you doing here? And Norma? Why are you here with all these people, when you know I've been waiting so long for you at home?"

Then the scalding turmoil in her body and the repeated horrible shocks to her soul became too much for Susie to stand, and she fainted away into Brad's strong arms. This seemed to snap the bonds of confusion and despair which had been restraining Big Bill. He whirled on the intruding group of young fellows and began shoving them out of the room. Brad gently placed Susie on the bed and, with Bob Ponci helping, they soon had the suite cleared of all but the principal characters in their strange scene. Even Charlie got on his trousers and helped eject the last of the predators.

Then the four women and four men sat down and tried to straighten things out.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A little later Dr. Waring appeared and spoke privately with Bob Ponci. "That girl you asked me to look over is

now haemorrhaging quite severely. She'll be all right, I'm sure, but I've arranged for her to go to the local hospital for the night."

Then the doctor looked deeply into Bob's eyes and spoke slowly and meaningfully. "Is this girl really as important to you as you said?"

"Yes, she is, Doctor. She's the most important person in the world to me. And I think it's becoming mutual. I certainly hope so. Why are you asking?"

"Well, her record should read that she has suffered a spontaneous miscarriage," replied the doctor. "But since she is such a good friend of yours, and not yet married to you, I think we can report that she is just having a haemorrhage from some unknown cause."

"That is very thoughtful of you, Doctor. She and I both appreciate your diplomacy. How soon will the ambulance be here for her?"

"In a few minutes. She's safe and comfortable now, and should be back to normal in a few days."

"I'll be in to see her before she leaves, and ride to the hospital with her. And when you go back now, be sure to give her my love, till I get there."

When Bob rejoined the hectic meeting in the motel, Carol, still wholly naked, was just finishing what had evidently been a long and strong speech.

"I'm not trying to put all the blame on my father and his underhand, illegal way of living. I'm just saying that I've been a damned fool about the things I've done. I was trying to make up in quantity and variety for what I should have been having in depth and quality. But now that's all changed. Charlie and I have found what we need. In each other. The adjustments won't be easy or perfect for us, but I'm sure we'll succeed. And anybody that tries to stop us will have a real fight on his hands. From both of us."

Big Bill Brandon stared from his daughter to the man she had so decisively picked for her husband. Then he

spoke in a manner that showed his determination. "Maybe I've been a fool, too. I've probably done a lot of things I shouldn't. But my only excuse is that I was trying to get power and money to provide security for Carol. I nearly ruined her, instead. From now on I'm going to play things straight and legal. That goes for the Silver Palm here and all my other connections. Starting right now, Bob Ponci is to run this place on a strictly legitimate basis."

When the meeting broke up, Mother Perkins began to fuss like a mother-hen over Susie who had been listening intently. Norma was also being very solicitous about the little blonde girl, but Brad Morrison quietly pushed his way in and sat down beside Susie on the bed with one of his big arms thrown protectively around her shoulders. He looked up at the frowning faces of Norma and Mother Perkins after a loving smile for the petite blonde girl beside him.

"Susie and I have had quite a talk this evening, before all the excitement started here. I don't know just how I did it, but I feel that Susie and I are now on the same side. We're a solid team, working together in what seems to be a three-cornered struggle for control of her, body and soul."

Brad paused, and both Mother Perkins and Norma started to speak in defense of their interest in the tiny beautiful girl. But Brad held up his hand, commanding silence till he had finished.

"This battle for Susie had her mother trying to enforce absolute celibacy and emotional sterility on one side. Then Norma tried to entice her into an exclusively feminine emotional entanglement, for a second alternative. And I've wanted her to be my wife. I would have won a long time ago if I had not been stupidly violent and violently stupid. But she has now given me another chance, and I'm sure I'm going to win."

Again the two hovering women started to protest, each

determined that her scheme was the best for Susie. But again Brad cut them off as he spoke.

"Because Susie and I still have a lot of discussing and planning and things to do, I suggest that Norma drive Mrs. Perkins home sometime soon. The two of you may not like this proof of the fact that you've lost control over Susie, but she is going to stay with me for a while more. Alone. Isn't that right Susie?"

The little blonde glanced up briefly to meet the gaze of her mother and her former female lover, and then said, "That's right. I want to stay with Brad. For as long as he wants me to. Maybe forever."

It was well after midnight when Brad and Susie at last found themselves alone together in one of the motel suites. All the others had left, — Bob Ponci to go to the hospital with Cissie Reynolds, Carol and Charlie to continue their exploration of the changes they had so strangely effected in each other, Mother Perkins and Norma to bemoan their losses, and Big Bill Brandon alone to the bar where he would supervise the operation of the club while he planned the necessary changes in his life and work.

Susie did not tell Brad that part of her preliminary acceptance of him and his love was the fact that she was still suffering from the flames which Norma had lit several days before. This pre-heating of her latent passions would help get her over the first shock of adjustment after her long manless period of waiting. After that, she knew that the future could take care of itself under the kind, gentle, loving and masculine guidance of Brad's affection.

Brad sat on the edge of their bed with Susie in his lap as his hands flowed worshipfully over her exquisite body, exciting them both to do what they knew was soon to come. Her dainty but firmly lush curves came quiveringly alive under his stimulations, and when Brad tenderly laid her down on the bed, she was as eager as he for

the ensuing steps.

Shyly but ardently she helped him remove her clothing, and she felt a deep inner thankfulness when he thought to turn off most of the light in the room. Now he quickly but not frantically discarded his own garments and they lay in throbbing warm close intimacy on the bed, side by side. Without her conscious volition Susie felt her body begin to writhe and squirm in fervent anticipation of their ultimate union. His firm masculinity was no longer a symbol of alarm and painful menace, but a reassuring evidence of his love and his ability to satisfy the passions which surged with ever increasing strength within her.

Under his loving caresses and kisses Susie felt her full firm breasts rise in ardent acceptance, and her arms strained him ever closer against her. Now he was crouching over her and she felt no fear of the ultimate intimacy which was immanent. Only the thrill of coming fulfillment. She knew she had found her perfect mate, her partner for life.

Brad was all too conscious of the tragedy which his former rash and passionate impetuosity had created on the occasion of their first attempts at physical love. Now he was straining to control his surging impulses at least until Susie could join him in savoring their mutual ecstasy. Slowly and beautifully he felt their heated flesh conjoin, and the passion of their kiss told of her complete acceptance of him in all ways.

Still Brad held himself back. Only when her arms and legs, and her moaning sighs of release told him that she was well launched into emotional orbit did he start the brief powerful pounding that made him blast off with her in a wildly spiralling ecstasy of sublime beauty for both.

Later as they prepared to repeat this superb rite of physical communion, they both knew with unquestioned certainty that the correct person had finally won the strange three-cornered struggle for Susie's body and soul.

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